THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRAINING MODEL THAT PROMOTES UNITY AMONG MULTIPLE GENERATIONS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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A FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Dayton, Ohio
May 2023

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ABSTRACT

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by
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United Theological Seminary, 2023

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The context for this project was Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church in Winnsboro, South Carolina. This project addresses the inability of adult church members to collaborate in performing their ministry assignments If the various generations receive training about how to collectively implement ministry assignments, then they will have a greater understanding of the teamwork concept of the local church. The qualitative methods of pre-and post-test surveys, journalizing, and post-interviews were utilized during this training to measure the project's outcome. The test results indicated that the participants were willing to foster unity despite their generational differences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my utter gratitude to the Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church family for supporting me and following my leadership. You are a community of faith that dare to be opened to innovations. You wholeheartedly welcomed us and have been very thoughtful of my family.

Words are inadequate for me to fully express my appreciation and gratitude to my mentors, Dr. Dexter Cannon and Dr. Charles Jackson, and faculty advisor, Dr. Anthony Le Donne. Dr. Cannon, thank you for your conscientious endeavor in directing me through this entire program of studies. You understand and have first-hand experience with this process. Dr. Charles Jackson, thank you for your guidance and input throughout the process. For your part, Dr. Le Donne, you are a reservoir of knowledge. Thank you for the materials you suggested to strengthen the biblical foundation chapter of my work. Additionally, I appreciate all my focus group peers' suggestions and assistance through the various stages of the development of this documentation.

I want to thank my professional associates for their willingness to help me produce this well-researched and written academic work. Your recommendation and feedback were remarkable. To my context associates, I want to say a big thank you. I could not have gotten better context associates than you all. You helped me in the implementation of the project.

Additionally, I want to recognize my editor, Dr. Kenneth Cummings. I am so delighted that you consented to serve as my editor. Without any reservation, I can say that you were more than an editor to me. Dr. Cummings, in my book, you are one of the best, if not the best editor that work with doctoral students at United Theological Seminary.

Moreover, I appreciate the Human Research Subject Team that reviewed my project proposal. You helped me in structuring a better hypothesis and statement of the problem. You enabled me to ask open-ended questions to unearth more information from the participants that resulted in me gathering better data.

Furthermore, this project would not have been implemented without the participants. I recognize the participants in a significant way. Your participation was invaluable to the outcome of the project. Thank you for being an essential component of the seven-week of interactive workshops.

Ultimately, I want to acknowledge the Author and Supreme Architect of human existence, the Almighty God. The Lord was my primary source of strength during the entire duration of this process. The Lord kept me focused on my studies amidst the demands of life.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my lovely wife, Caroline Mitchell Barclay, and our beautiful daughters, Cornelia, Carvina, and Caslyn. You all were very supportive and understanding in allowing me to use the time I should have spent with the family to focus on my doctorate studies. I would not have been able to complete this doctorate degree without your collective help. I would like you to know that I will be eternally grateful.

Thank you, Caroline, Cornelia, Carvina, and Caslyn, from the bottom of my heart.

ABBREVIATIONS

AME	African Methodist Episcopal
ESV	English Standard Version
MGTT	Multiple Generational Tact Team
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version

Every team's challenge is building a feeling of oneness of dependence on one another because the question is usually not how well each person performs but how well they work together.
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—Vince Lombardi, *Decision Innovation: Teamwork Quote*

INTRODUCTION

The absence of unity among the various generations in churches has the propensity to hurt the holistic development of the local church. Unity among the local church members is indispensable to the life and witness of the church. The local church only flourishes when an agreement exists among the members. Ministry assignments must be executed cooperatively. Solo ventures, most times, are not beneficial to the local church. The members of the local community of faith can be compared to a puzzle that when one is missing, that puzzle cannot be completed. Every piece of the puzzle has an essential role to play in the completion of the puzzle. Therefore, with unity, the local church will unconditionally succeed with the help of God.

This doctoral dissertation views generational collaboration as a training process that church people undergo to develop a positive shift in their attitudes and behaviors. Voluminous materials are available that deal with generational unity. This work used the social psychological theory of interdependence that focuses on the mutuality of dependance to gain insight. This project was structured around the utilization of a cross-section of church members for seven weeks of interactive training workshops. This paper concentrated on the need of Mount Zion AME Church to incorporate workable principles for generational cooperation in the execution of their ministry assignments.

Chapter one, Ministry Focus, delves into my spiritual journey that informed the implemented project. In conjunction with assessing my spiritual journey, this chapter will

analyze the context of my ministry setting. The objective of chapter one is to form a synergy between my spiritual journey and ministry context that gives insight and leads to the formation of my research topic.

Chapter two, Biblical Foundations, investigates and analyzes the biblical text chosen to undergird this thesis and project. A solid biblical foundation text that supports unity in the local church was employed to stimulate generational cooperation in fostering the teamwork concept of the local church that this work attempts to encourage. The Holy Scripture advocate for multiple generations' partnership in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 by highlighting and promoting unity in the Body of Christ. This passage is the basis of the research project's biblical foundation that directs and guides the entire investigation.

Chapter three, Historical Foundation, will provide an analysis, examination, and description of the historical figure in the person of Saint Cyprian (Thascius Caecillus Cyprianus), Bishop of Carthage. Saint Cyprian stimulated, encouraged, and electrified the Carthaginian Church to unite after the Decian Persecution. The whole of Saint Cyprian's personality was centered around promoting unity in the church. He focused most of his attention on issues that unified and did not divide the church. He may have realized that the church would be in crisis without unity. Therefore, he promoted reconciliation and forgiveness among church members as a practical leader.

Chapter four, Theological Foundations, will explore the theological constructs for this endeavor. It gives an in-depth look at Practical Theology and deals with Pastoral Theology on the surface. In mathematical terms, one can consider practical theology as the universal set of the church and pastoral theology as a unit within the entire collection. This part of the work will discuss the practical application of theology as a theology of

action. It will also consider pastoral theology of reflection as a theology of healing. Both theologies help to guide and empower all generations in the local church. These theologies meet local church members where they are and focus on how to bring the best out of them.

Chapter five, Interdisciplinary Foundations, concentrates on social psychology as a discipline and how it interfaces with the other foundations as it speaks to the motif of intergenerational collaboration. This chapter exposes several social psychological approaches that support the hypothesis and theme of the project. It unearths that attitudinal changes directly relate to behavioral and personality changes. Therefore, it is a good starting point for the interdependence theory model that can help shift the mindset of multiple generations to promote unity in the implementation of their ministry assignments.

Chapter six, Project Analysis, underlines the methodology used to implement the project. It spells out in vivid detail how the project evolves, including the interactions between participants, the presenter or researcher, and the participants and the methods used to gather the data. This chapter also explains how the data were analyzed to answer the hypothesis and to ascertain the veracity of the project.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

This synergy paper aims to communicate and unearth how my ministry experiences and context have momentously influenced my ministry expedition. It will also speak to how the Lord continues to utilize my past ministerial and professional involvements and context in the formation of my project. The synergy work comes at a time in my ministry context that allows me the opportunity to help train, nurture, and develop innovative and holistic God-fearing leaders that will distinguish themselves among their peers within and outside of the local church. The local leaders are excited to undertake the rigid process of learning and practicing how to lead within the sub-urban context of our setting.

I intend to fully explore some of the ways how unity can be promoted among the multiple generations as they implement their ministry assignment in my context. In this synergy work, I will point out by what means my spiritual journey interrelates and have a correlation to the needs of my context. I will also navigate how the relationship between my ministry interest and capacity and the demands of my context will form the basis for my Doctor of Ministry project. Before developing my Doctor of Ministry project, I formulated a theme statement and hypothesis that guided this undertaking.

Context

Mount Zion is one of the many local congregations within the African Methodist Episcopal Connection. The most important mission of all African Methodist Episcopal Churches is

> [T]o invite people into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We also equip believers to render service as an expression of life in Christ. Inspired ministry fulfills the mission of Christ's love in the world. Through this application of discipleship, we live accountably in faith and love[1]

One of the significant strengths of Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church is that many members are willing to explore new ideas and ways of doing ministry. We now have both traditional and contemporary worship experiences. Even the traditional worship experience that we still have to meet some members' spiritual needs has been improved upon. However, fear of the unknown is still a challenge for them. They look up to the leaders, especially the pastor, for directions and guidance on delving into unknown territories. Members cautiously grab the visions of the church leadership. Elmer L. Town, in his book, *Biblical Models for Leadership*, states that leadership is the "process of helping people do the worthwhile things they want to do."[2] In other words, leadership is the process of persuading people to do what they think is right. It involves effecting changes in an organization, institution, group, etc. There are good leaders and bad leaders.

Excellent leadership is essential for the growth and development of any church, organization, or institution. Under no condition should Christian leadership only be confined to a Christian setting. Christian leadership should transcend the walls of

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[1] *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville, TN: AME Sunday School Union, 2016), 1.

[2] Elmer L. Town. *Biblical Models for Leadership* (Mason, OH: Cengage, 2011), 1.

Christianity. The Bible points out "that we are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men" (Mt 5:13, NIV). A good character cannot be purchased in the marketplace. It is built little by little over a period. An individual character is at the center of their personality. To be an effective Christian leader, your character must be above reproach.

God has implanted in every individual some natural gifts and abilities. I believe that I have several inborn talents and skills that are unique to that I need to cultivate for the good of God's creation and myself. These natural gifts and abilities can open doors of opportunities for me. The Bible states that "a man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men" (Proverb 18:16, NKJ).

Harold Myra and Marshall Shelley, in their book *The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham*, draw a line between being a leader and a manager. They indicated that "managers work mostly within an organization while leaders develop key relationships outside the organization."[3] Based on this distinction, Graham stood out as a leader. In Graham's leadership, he built bridges instead of walls with others to move his cause forward.

Leadership should be seen as a community project that involves every one of the community members. Kenneth Boa indicated that "corporate spirituality focuses on the dynamics of life together in the Spirit as an essential source of spiritual health and maturity, but it also recognizes the fragility of this process and the many ways in which it

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[3] Harold Myra and Marshall M. Shelley, *The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 2005), 221.

can be undermined."[4] Leaders should not allow the challenges within and outside the church community to deter them from interacting with members of the community of faith.

For Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church to train, develop, and nurture innovative generational leaders, we must first understand what is meant by strategic planning. Aubrey Malphurs cited in his *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, that strategic planning is "the envisioning process that a point leader uses with a team of leaders on a regular basis to think and act so as to design and redesign a specific ministry model that accomplishes the Great Commission in their unique ministry context."[5]

The major challenge facing my context is the inability of adult church members to work together in performing their ministry assignments. The frictions are intensified because, to a large extent, issues that occur among families outside of the church make their way into the church. The entire church is somehow related to each other. As a result, family dramas, most time, are brought over to the church. It is seen on display at church meetings and other gatherings. Reconciliation matters because the consequences of not reconciling can be enormous to all parties. Reconciliation is one of the most effective and durable ways to transform relationships and prevent destructive conflicts. Harold Wells, in *The Reconciliation of the Peoples: Challenge to Churches*, states that "the gospel of Christ calls us to a ministry of reconciliation and to

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[4] Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 415.

[5] Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders,* 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 26.

be peacemakers."[6] Good relationships build stronger teams. So, in order for the adult church members to reconcile and become peacemakers, they must receive training in the teamwork concept of the local church.

Mount Zion AME Church has not been successful in training adult members to see themselves as ministry partners regardless of age. For instance, adult members belonging to different generations but having the same ministry assignment are undermining each other when it comes to implementing their assignment plan of actions. On another note, older adult members seem not to value and respect the opinion of younger adult members who serve on the same ministry assignment regarding decision-making in the church. If adult members of all generations are unable to support each other ministry assignment, it is less likely for the local church to grow and develop.

Another challenge of Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church is that many church members are not involved with their ministry assignments. They have somehow a *laissez-faire* mindset to Christian ministry. All the ministries of the church are built around the pastor or ministry leader. If the pastor or ministry leader does not show up, most likely, no one will step up to lead. I continue to teach the membership that no one is indispensable, and each member has a role to play in the local congregation's life, growth, and development.

To address and somehow reverse this weakness in my ministry context, there is a need for a total paradigm shift in leadership approach. I tend to agree with James MacGregor Burns in his book *Leadership*, that "transformational leadership is a type of leadership style that leads to positive changes in those who follow. Transformational

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[6] Gregory Baum and Harold Wells, eds, *The Reconciliation of People: Challenge to the Churches* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 1.

leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate."[7] The components of transformational leadership are intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence.[8]

As the lead leader in my context, I find pleasure in interacting with others as we formulate attainable goals and objectives for our common good. God has blessed me with a clear vision that always produces fruitful results in my ministry. Developing short, medium, and long-range plans in ministry and life are strengths that I have, and I am grateful to God for them.

I think that I am uniquely and strategically positioned to help the membership of Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church to develop and cultivate the leadership skills that are already embedded in them that they are not aware of or overlooked. I tend to agree with Harold Myra and Marshall Shelley that "leadership requires awareness of one's own emotions and depth; awareness of multiple forces shaping perceptions and drives; awareness of dark and the light and the large consequences of one's acts." I am of the most profound conviction that the members of Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church under my care have leadership skills that they are not utilizing for the advancement of our local community of faith.

My Professional Journey

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[7] James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1978), 47.

[8] Burns, *Leadership*, 47-48.

My professional life covers a wide range of activities. I worked as a high school classroom teacher at the Monrovia College and Industrial Training School, Incorporated. Later, I was promoted to the post of Administrative Assistant to the President, and when the president retired, I served on the Management Team that ran the institution for six months until the new president took office. Furthermore, I taught Economics, Banking and Finance at the African Methodist Episcopal University. Additionally, I also served as the special assistant to the President of the African Methodist Episcopal University. Afterward, I left the educational world and transferred to the corporate financial world. In the corporate world, I worked as a Senior Relationship Manager and Bank Executive with Ecobank. Presently, I am still working in the corporate world with Toronto Dominion Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank. These are meaningful skills and experiences that are beneficial to my context.

My Ministry Journey

My spiritual life has a direct relationship to my faith perspective. I believe the upright ought to survive by the conviction in the Lord. I think my ministry journey began years before I accepted the call to preach. I have siblings on both sides of my parents. My siblings on my mother's side want me all to themselves, and my siblings on my father's side want likewise. I find myself in the middle abridging the division between them and promoting unity amidst their disunity.

My early adolescence years were some of the most wonderful, magnificent, fantastic, unique, and breathtaking periods in my existence on these lands of the living. Some of my challenging and extraordinary experiences occurred when I converted from

sin in repentance and turned to God by faith. I also started developing my leadership skills in middle school, my home church, and the community, and these skills seem very helpful for my context and proposed project.

I can still vividly remember that afternoon while on my way home from school on a public street, I heard an evangelist named Reverend Lawrence Kennedy, an evangelical preacher proclaiming about the Risen Christ and His resurrection power. This middle school student, Cassius, was touched. I felt the very presence of the Lord in that crowd. On that fateful day when the invitation was given to the waiting crowd, I wholeheartedly accepted Christ Jesus as my Lord and personal Savior. Reverend Kennedy admonished us as brand-new converts to read the gospel account of saint John daily to strengthen our decisive decision to walk with the Lord.

I formally joined the Eliza Turner Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church, went through the new membership class, and was baptized by immersion within the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Early on the morning of my fourteenth birth anniversary, in the presence of witnesses, I was baptized by the Reverend Jeremiah E. January, who was the assistant pastor at the Eliza Turner Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church at the time. Witnesses present were both of my grandparents, James and Cornelia, Yancy Peters Flah, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steward Board, and other church members.

Just as I transitioned from the stage of adolescence to early adulthood, I publicly said yes to the Lord with an apparent sense of my calling or vocation. I entirely recognize that God is a God of pardon and love. As a result, I sincerely started seeking nothing but God with a sound understanding and proper judgment. I was blessed to have preached

what we called in our denomination a trial sermon about two years after accepting my calling.

My high school years at the Monrovia College and Industrial Training School served as the pivotal point in my ministry journey. During these years, I began to get involved in active campus ministry. I joined the Sober Watchman Ministry as one of the ministers on campus. The Sober Watchman Ministry built its objective around Ezekiel 33:1-16. The major prophet admonishes that God has sent them to watch people and warn them of danger. My involvement with the campus intergenerational and interdenominational ministry helped form my understanding of working with students and people of all ages and different religious persuasions. As an active campus minister, I also served as president of the social science class in high school. Additionally, I was the youth president of the Eliza Turner Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Cathedral of African Methodism in West Africa. Later, I served as president of Liberia Annual Conference, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Young People's Division, and Secretary-General of the Liberian Council of Churches Youth Desk. As president of the local and subsequence annual conference Young People's Division, I presided over executive board meetings, represented the organization at functions, appointed task forces or committees for necessary duties to carry on the division's work, and kept the organization together, vibrant, and strong. As secretary-general of the Youth Desk of the Liberian Council of Churches, I coordinated the day-to-day affairs of all ecumenical youths in the country across all denominations.

Innovative servant leadership has been at the nucleus of my leadership by leading not by my agenda but by the power of the Holy Spirit with an apparent motive and

tenacity of purpose. My days at the Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary were fascinating. The professors were well experienced. I became thirstier for biblical, theological, and philosophical truths. It is important to note that two of the most precious resources in my mini library are my introduction to theology and church history notebooks.

My professional ministry experience started while I was a student at the Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary. This seminary was the best in the nation and served as the nurturing ground for training Christian ministers from all denominations in the country. My seminary days at the Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary will forever be cherished because they formed my theological and philological dispositions of the Christian faith. I was also involved in leadership as the secretary of my class during my years at the Baptist Seminary.

I enjoyed sharing my testimonies, life lessons, Godly passions, and the Good News as a practicing Christian. My testimonies are the stories of how I began my relationship with Christ Jesus. My relationship with Christ Jesus has had been a smooth ride. I have had my fair shares of ups and downs. My life lessons are the most important lessons the Lord has taught me. My Godly passions are the costs that Jesus the Christ has used to shape me; then the Good News is the message of salvation.

The Right Reverend David Rwhynica Daniels, Jr., the 124th elected and consecrated Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, has significantly influenced my life. He currently serves our Zion with honor and distinction. Through his pastoral ministry at the Eliza Turner Memorial African Methodist Church, I got to know myself, accept myself, and give myself to the will and perfect purpose of God for my life.

I was proud to serve as his special and administrative assistant to Bishop Daniels for a couple of years when he served as episcopal leader of the 14th Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church. On another note, the Reverend Doctor Tar-U-Way Richard Allen Bright succeeded the then Reverend Daniels as pastor of the Eliza Turner Methodist African Methodist Episcopal Church and took me as a smaller brother in ministry and life.

Dr. Myles Munroe's book, *Understanding Your Potential,* also helped me discover my hidden potentials. When I read this inspiring text, I learned in a new way that everything in life was created with potential. Potential is the dormant ability, reserved power, untapped strength, hidden talents, and limited capability. Potential is, therefore, not what you have done but what you are capable of doing but have not done. In other words, what you have accomplished is no longer potential. Potential demands that you never settle for what you have accomplished. One of the greatest enemies of your potential is your success. I believed that the greatest tragedy in life is death, but upon intentional reading this book, I have understood that death is not the worst tragedy. The worst calamity is a life that never realized its full potential. We all have challenges that tend to pull us down. Nevertheless, failure is not the absence of success but the neglect of trying.[9]

I hold earned degrees in the disciplines of theology, economics, corporate finance, and human services on the bachelor and master levels. I completed a One-Year Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Residency Program at Palmetto Health, now Prisma Health, in Columbia, South Carolina. As a trained chaplain who has completed four units of clinical

[9] Myles Munroe, *Understanding Your Potential* (Shippensbury, PA: Destiny Image Publisher, Inc., 2002), 21-30.

pastoral education, I pay very close attention when listening to people. Over the years, I have heard both the formal and informal conversations of my context members. From these conversations, I have sensed their desire to take ownership of the ministry assignment. However, they are hindered because they do not know how to lead others. I believe that everyone has the right to tell their story, and if I want people to listen to me and follow my leadership, I must be willing to listen to others. By just listening to people's stories, I will be of help to them. Some people only want somebody to share their grief. Therefore, I must create a healthy environment that will lead to a trusting relationship.

Ministerially, I have served as Director of Christian Education and President of the Ministerial Staff at the Eliza Turner Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church. I served as District Church School Superintendent on the presiding elder district level. I pastored four African Methodist Episcopal Churches in the annual conferences: Heard Ebenezer, Faith, Geda, and Mount Zion, where I presently serve.

As the director of Christian education my duties and responsibilities included but were not limited to teaching, training, disciplining, and forming people in the likeness of Christ. In addition, I instructed and introduced people to the life and mission of the church. In my service as a pastor, I served as the servant leader of the local church.

My pastoral experiences have been engaging. In three of the four churches I have pastored, including my present charge, I was assigned to a church dealing with disunity and division among its adult church members of various generations. At Faith Church, the younger adult generation of the church was unhappy that their pastor was reassigned, and the older adult generation could not stand that pastor, so they were happy with my

assignment. At Geda Church, I had to deal with three groups of adult members. One group did not favor the bishop. Another group approved of the bishop, and the last group did not care either way. At my present church, I was assigned to a church that requested to withdraw its relationship from the AME Connection. I had to deal with two sets of adult members of all generations. There was a segment that wanted to leave the AME Church and others that wanted to stay. In each situation, I had to bring all the adult members of different generations together for the good of each local establishment.

I received my first ministerial order as an ordained itinerant deacon in March 2000. As an itinerant deacon my duties were to preach the Word of God, assist the elder in distributing the communion after it was consecrated; and in the absence of the elder, administer the Sacrament of Baptism, perform the rite of matrimony, and be a guardian of the church's law. Two years later, in March of 2002, I was elected and ordained an itinerant elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. As an itinerant elder, in addition, to performing all itinerant deacon functions, I can independently consecrate the Holy Communion. The Lord has opened many opportunities for me to minister to God's people.

I unearthed early in my ministry what Pierre Wolff called in his book, *Discernment: The Art of Choosing Well*, the three-spiritual growths in a person. These spiritual growths are awareness, sensitivity, and management. Awareness is by growing familiarized with using the tools of discernment to deepen individual self-knowledge. We increasingly ascertain more about our wounds, weaknesses, strengths, tendencies, and their impact on our lives. In other words, we become more aware of who we are. At the same time, we obtain a fuller understanding of who God is. The second spiritual growth

sensitivity comes about when a person becomes more conscious of their identity; the sooner a person can recognize what will favor his or her life or death in each situation, the better off that person is. This is when discernment brings about a trained intuition that enables us to detect injustice immediately, be alert to people's needs, or perceive right away the risks to be taken. The third spiritual growth management embodies an individual awareness and sensitivity about who they are and how they are called to act. Our capacity to manage our life grows more effectively. We see more clearly what we can and cannot do and how to live with that. We become more innovative managers of our life.[10]

In my life, ministry, and all forms of relationships, I allow other people's views to exist even if they are opposite of mine. In the past, I tried so hard to avoid conflicts. I have now come to accept that conflict is an integral part of life. Fast forward, I have now resolved to face conflicts head-on and bring about an amicable way forward that is beneficial to all parties. The most outstanding hallmark of my ministerial journey over the years has been enabling practicing Christians to understand that we accomplish more by working together with each other because together everyone accomplish more.

I have been in leadership or very close to strong leaders who have placed me in authority for most of my life. Power has a way of distorting a person's reality. Most time, people whom you lead often tell you what you want to hear and not what you should know. Based on my experiences in the church and corporate world, people do not speak the truth to those in power. Therefore, leaders should develop trusting relationships with the people that they lead for a line of communication to exist between them.

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[10] Pierre Wolff, *Discernment: The Art of Choosing Well* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publication, 1993), 69-71.

I tend to concur with the empirical evidence put forth by Malphurs Aubrey, who states that, "when a leader attempts to influence people, they engage in a conscious and unconscious evaluation of the leader and will follow only if they deem him or her credible."[11] I have experienced these findings in my professional and vocational life as a Christian leader. Most of those I am opportune to lead have had some reservations concerning my leadership capability, including my current ministry context, until I prove to them that I am a trustworthy and credible leader to trust and follow.

Developing the Synergy

I intend to explore ways that the local church members of all ages can team up for the collective implementation of their ministry assignments. This approach will be utilized because there is an enormous need for the membership to see themselves as partners instead of competitors in ministry. Christian ministry is a collaborative undertaking that is only meaningful with people supportive of others.

The Bible explicitly shows that even Christ Jesus, God incarnate, did not execute his ministry alone. He incorporated twelve disciples to serve as his immediate lieutenants in the execution of his earthly ministry (Mt 10:2-4; Mark 3:14-19; and Luke 6:13-16). Jesus' model of ministry, in partnership with other people, should be practiced by all his followers.

It has been determined that there is a need for positive generational interactions among the local church membership. One reason for this meaningful communication among the various generations is that every generation in the local church may have

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[11] Malphurs, *Being Leaders,* 50.

specifics of implementing their ministry assignments. This is a healthy conversation to have with the generations. These dialogues are excellent because Mount Zion African Methodist Church has many formal and informal organizational meetings and general conversations for the growth and development of local ministries.

There must be a marriage between leadership style and core values. If there is any form of non-alignment, it will lead to misunderstanding, and misunderstanding would lead to conflict in the local church. As a result, very little will be achieved because generations of the membership will be dissatisfied.

An additional reason for getting the various generations in the local church to work collectively in implementing their ministry assignments is because there is a need for interdependence. Many members in the local church, including myself, need to change our attitude in doing ministry. The one-person or group method of getting things done in the local church is unhealthy and should be discontinued.

To reconcile my context, we must develop leaders of all generations who are willing to initiate the complex task of working with all members. We need to nurture leaders who can separate facts from fictions, feelings from reality, and spiritual from secular. This could be done by mentorship.

Through my Doctor of Ministry project, I seek to learn that all ages are teachable and that most people learn by imitation, consistent practice, and mentorship. I believe that the Christian faith is built on Christ Jesus and mentorship. For a classic example, Jesus the Christ demonstrated mentoring with his disciples (Mt 14:23, Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46, and Luke 6:12-17). He modeled and taught them the law of the Old Testament and God's Word in general. He shared His life and ministry with them. He taught them how to pray.

He modeled servant leadership. He taught them that the Lord would supply their needs. He gave them the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out their work. In short, Jesus used practical examples in training and mentoring his disciples.

Furthermore, the importance of mentorship can be seen in other places in the Holy Scriptures. Ruth took the initiative to be mentored by her mother-in-law. She was attracted to Naomi as a mentee. Eli mentored Samuel (1 Sam 3:1-10). Samuel became an outstanding religious leader. Elijah mentored Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21). Elisha was prepared to take his place after his departure. Mordecai also trained his cousin Esther to become a queen of great strength and character (Esther 2:7-17). As a result, she could stand the test of time in support of her people and say, “if I perish, I perish.” Paul mentored Timothy (Acts 17:14). Timothy was prepared to lead in Paul's absence. These classic examples of mentor-mentee relationships cannot be over emphasized.

The mentor will lead to creating a warm space of trust and intimacy. He or she will lead the mentee in the process of recognizing the presence of God in his or her life. The mentor sees the undeveloped ability or abilities of the mentee and tries to unearth it in them. A mentor should be praying, listening, and spiritually led individual. On the other hand, a mentee is an individual who yearns for both spiritual growth and maturity. They should be willing to submit and open themselves to the mentor regarding the personal unfolding stories of their lives. Mentees should be humble, willing to learn, committed to a cost, and good followers desiring divine leadership.

Because of all the earlier discussions in this work, I intend to explore the methodology of identifying, developing, training, and nurturing a new brand of leaders

for my context through imitation, mentoring, and constructive engagements. Many of the members in my context lack the confidence to lead. Cultivating self-confidence in oneself takes time. It is a process and not an event.

James R. Estep and Jonathan J. Kim highlight in their book, *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology & Human Development,* that belief is a mental by-product of faith. It is an intellectual recognition that has a direct relationship with the truth. On the other hand, trust is a conscious decision that grows out of faith.[12] My context finds itself in such a place currently in our life and ministry where we are struggling to determine how the Lord wants us to produce new generational leaders who will uphold unity in the local church and not doubt their capacity to do just that. Therefore, James R. Estep and Jonathan J. Kim pointed out that "trusting requires the choice and the willingness to give oneself to the possibility that what we know is indeed true."[13]

Training and mentoring individuals from the various generations in the local church about supporting each other will go a long way. It is worth stating that not only the mentee stands to benefit from the relationship, but the mentor also does. Mentorship is a win-win relationship. However, from where I sit, mentorship has a timeframe. It is not forever in that mentees could become a mentor in time to come. Those who are trained and mentored become the trainers and mentors of others in their generation. This approach will develop several generational leader leaders who work cooperatively in uplifting unity and interdependence in the local church.

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[12] James R. Estep and Jonathan J. Kim, *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology & Human Development* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 79-80.

[13] Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation,* 80.

The Old Testament and New Testament speak about the power of interdependence and unity among the people of God. Interdependence is one of the cardinal principles that the Creator of heaven and earth expect us to embrace and use in our ministry. In the Old Testament, when God decided to make a helper be with Adam, this was a form of interdependence in the mind of God (Gen 2:18-24). Also, one of David's songs of ascents admonishes believers to hold together in unity (Psalm 133:1). When you cross over to the New Testament, the apostle Paul encourages the church of Corinth to avoid division in the body of Christ. He appealed to them to hold together. Paul understood the adverse effects of division on any institution; the church is no exception. Therefore, Paul states that, "I appeal to you, brothers, and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no division among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (I Cor 1:10, NIV).

Lastly, each of my academic achievements has helped shape my professional and ministerial development. As a theologian, I understand how to research and interpret biblical truth to uplift God's people. As an economist, I know how to utilize limited resources to meet the unlimited needs of the people to whom I minister to. As a financial expert, I am knowledgeable about raising funds for the sustainability of God's church on this side of heaven. As a human service professional, I have a first-hand understanding of how social problems can hurt any ministry and address these social issues. I believe that leadership and service are in my deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). I have been in high-level leadership roles from my teens in middle school to present adulthood.

My personal, ministerial, and professional experiences and skills positively imparted my context through my Doctor of Ministry project in many ways. It began with

the strong relationship that I have developed with people regarding listening, problem-solving, trust-building, conducting meetings, recognizing, and rewarding, questioning, counseling, trusting, leading, managing, or administering, and empowering. I am above average in encouraging, inspiring, motivating, team building, challenging, evaluating, delegating, disciplining, community building, evangelizing, recruiting, and building consensus with people. Also, my people skills are above average regarding networking, conflict resolution, risk-taking, disagreeing, confronting, and correcting. I intend to use my people skills to make this project successful.

My project's general nature and the content was centered on how to formulate a methodology that will serve as a launching path for unity and interdependence among the generations in the local church. My investigation gathered some shortcomings among the generations that hinder a positive shift in their attitudes toward unity and interdependency in the ministry of the assignments.

I uncovered why these generations in the local church are constantly working against each other. It seems to be an issue that has been passed down from the earlier leaders of the church. I went deeper in studying God's position on unity and interdependence in the local church. I unearthed how this project exposes the various reasons why generations do not support each other ministry assignment.

Conclusion

The tension of not supporting each other ministry assignment among the generations seems to be an old-age problem. However, I find myself in the right place at the right time. My positive track record as a Christian leader is a testimonial to my

leadership. Those I lead have confidence in me as a person and leader. Usually, with the help of the Holy Spirit, I formulate a workable and achievable plan of action and lead God's people entrusted into my care. I am most grateful and humbled that God has blessed me with the essential skills to be a first-class leader. I do not play games with my followers. I lead from the heart and not the mind with the Holy Spirit as my guide, and I keep an open line of communication with my church members.

Good leadership that encompasses all generations in the local community moves any church forward, and bad leadership that excludes some generations move it in a reverse manner. Theology and philosophy are very closely related and needed in any local church. Therefore, the generational leader's theology must be directed pertaining to their philosophy for the church to benefit.

As I conclude, I am happy that I was able to satisfy the requirements of my doctoral project by utilizing practical theology and some pastoral theology along with social psychology to put together a framework for generational partnership in the local church. I am of the innermost conviction that if the various generations are trained in the collective implementation of their ministry assignments, the results will lead to a more vibrant and unified local church.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter is an attempt to prove that unity among the multiple generations in the local church is supported by scripture. Dr. J. Elvin Sadler's description of the word "generation" in his book, *Pot Changers: Innovative Change in an Ever-Changing World,* is the working definition used for this project. He states that "a generation is a group of people born and living at about the same time, regarded collectively. It can also be described as the average period from birth to adolescence to adulthood."[14] The generations that make up Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church fall within the following generations that Dr. Sadler highlighted in his book: the Builder, the Boomer (Baby Boomer), the Buster, (known as Generation X), the Millennials, Generation Z, and Generation Alpha.[15] The generational focus of this project will cover the Builder Generation to Generation Z above eighteen years old.

The metaphorical image of the church as the body of Christ is amazing. This image captures the attention of church members in the past and present. Paul was very creative in painting this picture to a church that was plague by disunity. I see that the whole book of 1 Corinthians is marked by divisions. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 fits precisely

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[14] J. Elvin Sadler, *Pot Changers: Innovate Change in an Ever-Changing World* (Matthews, NC: Sack Publishing, 2020), 78.

[15] Sadler, *Pot Changers*, 78-82.

into the central theme of the whole letter. To a large extent, the Corinthian Church seems to be the most divided community of faith in the entire setting of the New Testament. Therefore, it was imperative for Paul to use the human body to communicate the significance of unity in the church. The way the human body functions as a unified organism despite of the various parts cannot be overemphasized.

This biblical foundation exegetical chapter consists of an introduction that sets the groundwork for the entire paper. In the introduction the general feature of the project is explained. This work also gives a complete overview of the book of 1 Corinthians to include but not limited to authorship, writing style, importance, historical background, contextual analysis, literary review, and the message Paul's letter seeks to communicate to the listeners at that moment and now. The strategic location of Corinth is discussed in relationship to its diverse population that was opened and accepting to ethnicity. The plot, setting, characters, and conflict that erupted in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 are analyzed in an attempt to understand the details of what was happening. Further, this work lays out the relevance of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 to my project.

Paul's treatment of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 is a classic example of how the church should function, my context being no exception. The problem I have undertaken to research in my context is similar to what transpired in the passage under examination. Multiple generations in my context are sincerely attempting to move the church into different directions. The intent of each of these generations is good. Nevertheless, the methodology being used to achieve these goals and objectives are having an undesirable effect on the total life of my context. This attitude on the part of some members, if not checked, will adversely affect the sustainability and forward movement of the church.

Some of the words or images that stand out in the passage under examination are as follows: “diversity,” “body,” “body of Christ,” “the Church as the body of Christ” “spirit,” and “unity”. These words or images help to give a clearer direction to what this work seeks to unearth. This is because each one of them directly and indirectly throws light on significance of unity, which is the key word of this project.

The biblical foundations chapter focuses on 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 as the biblical passage in support of the project “The Development of A Training Model that Promotes Unity Among Multiple Generations in the Church.” This comprehensive, descriptive explanation of the Apostle Paul clearly signifies the significance of unity in diversity within the church.

The principal objectives of this work will be the following, but are not limited to, investigating the authorship of 1 Corinthians, the audience of 1 Corinthians and ways in which 1 Corinthians support and line up with the research project.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 states:

> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension

> within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (NRSV)

Paul D. Gardner, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, suggests a general overview of the project's passage. He underscores that,

> Paul now advances an extended metaphor (vv. 12-26) for the church that he describes as a human body. The intention of the metaphor is to demonstrate that every member of the church is vital and that the church will not function properly when one or more members are ignored or regarded as less useful or less valuable. The unity of the physical body, in which each part serves a different but import function, becomes a picture of how the body of the church ought to function and view its members.[16]

The above statement is on point aiding the hypothesis of the project. The assumption of this project is that every generation of the local church is important to its development. Therefore, the local church can only make progress when the generations are united.

Gordon D. Fee, the editor of *The First Epistle to the Corinthians in The New International Commentary on the New Testament,* posits that the passage that supports this project is in three sections, namely verses 12-14, 15-20 and 21-26.[17] Fee makes a convincing argument that:

> This first paragraph sets forth the basic presupposition of the imagery (the body is one) and its urgency (but has many members). This is followed by a twofold elaboration of the metaphor, the first part emphasizing diversity, the second unity. Paul's primary concern with this imagery is not that the body is one though it has many members, thus arguing for the need for unity despite their diversity. Rather, his concern is expressed in v. 14, that even though the body is one, it does not

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[16] Paul D. Gardner, *1 Corinthians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2018), 539.

[17] Gordon D. Fee, ed. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 601.

> consist of one member but of many, thus arguing for their need for diversity, since they are in fact one body.[18]

The assertion of Fee gives support to the usage of this passage as the biblical foundation of the project. The generations of the local church can be considered as the unity, and the ministry assignments as the diversity. Just as the body has many parts, the generations have several ministry assignments.

Fee also asserts that "Paul's concern is for their unity; but there is no such thing as true unity without diversity. Hence the need to strike that note so strongly."[19] In the local church there is no true ministry assignments with generational involvement.

Mark Allen Powell, the Robert and Phyllis Leatherman Professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, states:

> Denominational politics, doctrinal disputes, liturgical preferences – why can't Christians just learn to get to get along? It is an old question, as old as Christianity itself. The letter in our New Testament called 1 Corinthians reveals that church conflict is nothing new. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is perhaps best known for some of its individual passages.[20]

Misunderstanding surrounding church operations has been present in the church from its conception. The Apostle Paul penned 1 Corinthians to help Christians realize that working together for the common good of the church is essential to its growth and development. Daniel Patte pointed out that "the origin of the Corinthian church was associated with challenges."[21]

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[18] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* 601.

[19] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* 602.

[20] Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 289.

[21] Daniel Patte, *Global Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 445.

The Bible has several of passages that underscore and promote unity within the community of faith. The concept of holding and working together for the common good is indispensable to the any institution, the church being no exception. The fullest conversation surrounding the promotion of unity among multiple generations can be located in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. Here the necessity of unity in the church is laid out in a systematic way for the most common and biblical illiterate members to comprehend.

Mark Allen Powell clearly stated that "all churches have problems, one right after another. Some of those problems sound just like ones encountered in congregations today; other are linked to cultural situations that may seem foreign to modern readers".[22] Multiple generational issues are present in all churches. The message of 1 Corinthians is a practical approach Paul is utilizing to help members understand the composition of the church and how members are interdependent of each other.

In this passage, Paul is focusing on the notion of church unity. It is suggested by Andrew B. Spurgeon that,

> Paul illustrated his teaching of diversity and oneness with the example of the human body. He said, 'The body is one and has many members; but all the members of the body, although many, together form one body' (12:12a). In diversity the human body has many members (ears, eyes, hands, feet); and in oneness all body-parts together form one person. The same is true of Christ's body, the church; by the one Spirit all believers –Jews or Greeks, slaves or freed – are baptized into one body.[23]

The author's explanation is implying that Paul saw disunity in the church and knew that this was an issue that he had to address in the Church at Corinth, other churches that were existing, and future churches that would be established. Based upon Paul's elucidation on

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[22] Powell, *Introducing the New Testament,* 289.

[23] Andrew B. Spurgeon, *1 Corinthians: An Exegetical and Contextual Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 149.

the subject of unity, past generations, present generation, and future generations have a blueprint to implement in this important teaching.

The importance of diversity in the church cannot be overemphasized. Diversity is indispensable to church growth and development because of a number of reasons; one being that multiple generations makes up the church. Just as the various parts of the body are needed for a human being to function at his or her optimum level, every member of the church plays a role in the operational efficiency of the church. Diversity and unity work hand in hand. The church is on the right track when diversity and unity are displayed. Local church unity is exhibited when ministry assignments work in alignment with each other.

In this text, Paul links diverse spiritual gifts to the unity of the church.[24] I affirm the church as the unified body of Christ where spiritual gifts are directly proportional to the unity of the church. These gifts were distributed by God for the benefit of the church and to promote unity among multiple generations in the church. Vincent Branick was moved to state the following,

> Greek writers contemporary with Paul used the word 'body' (soma) to designate social entities. We do the same, as indicated in expressions like, 'the student body,' 'the legislative body,' etc. Paul picked up this use and by drawing attention to the physical analogue of this metaphor, he develops the theme of diversity in unity, the theme of organic. Not only does the diversity of organs in the body not harm unity, but actually
> supports it and is the essential condition for it.[25]

On the other hand, Andrew B. Spurgeon pointed out that Paul used illustrations to help people see the church as a unit. This unit supports all of the subunits within it that helps

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[24] Vincent P. Branick, *First Corinthians: Building Up the Church* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2001), 109.

[25] Branick, *First Corinthians,* 110-111.

to make it what it is. Paul does a good job of using literary expressions to describe what the church is or should be. The church being depicted as an organism means that the church is living.

The author's argument supports the interdependence among multiple generations in the church. The children, adolescences, early adults, early middle adult, late middle adults, and late adults' members of the church are critical parts of the church. Therefore, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 is vital regarding this doctoral project because it supports the biblical position of unity in the church that ensures that all generations work together in oneness for the betterment of the community of faith.

The City of Corinth

In their book *Ancient Corinth*, Guy D. R. Sanders, Jennifer Palinkas, Ioulia Tzonou-Herbst and James Herbst point out that:

> From earliest antiquity through medieval times Corinth has been a commercial hub acting as both as an entrepot and an emporium, moving cargo from one location to another while also servicing as a distributor for its own region. The great wealth of Corinth was not always on display in the form of flashy monuments; it was invested in commercial ventures. Nevertheless, the city's monuments were built on a truly impressive scale. The key to understanding Corinth and its wealth is its location. Corinth stands on the Isthmus, a narrow neck of land 6 km across, which connects the Peloponnese to mainland Greece. All land traffic passing from Thebes, Athens, and beyond to Olympia, Sparta, and Argos had to pass Corinth and its imposing acropolis on Acrocorinth. Corinth was the center of the network of road communication in southern Greece.[26]

From all indications, the city of Corinth was beautiful and strategically located. It had a diverse population and ways of doing things. It was a transit point in that geographical

[26] Guy D. R. Sanders, Jennifer Palinkas, Ioulia Tzonou-Herbst, and James Herbst, *Ancient Corinth: Site Guide*, 7th edition (Princeton, NJ: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2018), 11.

area. People came to the city for different purposes. It seems to be a place where different people, styles, theories were mixed together in the Roman world where religious diversity was the order of the day. No wonder why Paul had to address the division that had creeped into the community of faith.

Composition of the Corinthian Church

The makeup of the Corinthian Church was a direct representation of the city's socioeconomic, political, and religious population. Due to the geographical location of the Corinth, most of the members of the Corinthian Church were Gentile believers. Paul helped the Gentile believers to see themselves as an integral part of the body of Christ.[27]

Merrill C. Tenney stated that "the church at Corinth reemerges into literary history at the close of the 1st century A.D. In about the year 97, Clement of Rome wrote a letter, which survives, to the church. It reveals that the church was still vexed by many of the same problems about which Paul wrote to them."[28] Here one can assume that divisions still existed in the Corinthian Church long after Paul had written the letter to them.

Historical Background

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[27] J. Paul Sampley, "Acts," in *The New Interpreter's Bible. A Commentary in Twelve Volumes,* Volume X, ed. Leander Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 777-778.

[28] Merrill C. Tenney, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 1 A-C (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 964.

Large portions of present-day Greece consist of two Roman regions in the New Testament world. These regions were Macedonia and Achaia. Each of these earlier listed regions had their own capital. Thessalonica was the capital city for Macedonia. On the other hand, Corinth was the capital city of Achaia. Corinth covered a large land mass and was the most flourishing city in the Greco-Romans world. Corinth was situated approximately fifty miles from Athens. Corinth had a reputable place in the ancient world. It was viewed as an intellectual location. As recent as 44 BCE, freed slaves settled in Corinth.[29]

By all indications, Corinth was perfectly located. Powell emphasize that,

> The city was situated on a narrow strip of land: the Adriatic Sea lay to the west and the Aegean Sea to the east. Several Roman emperors proposed cutting a canal across the isthmus to allow ships to pass back and forth from Italy to Asia. The Corinthians would have that, but in the meantime, they did the next best thing. They established ports on either side of their little strip of land with a very nice road (called the 'Diolkos') between them. A ship could unload at either port and have its cargo and crew transferred by land to another ship just nine miles away. In fact, smaller ships were sometimes hoisted out of the water and pulled along the road on rollers to be deposited back into the ocean on the other side. Although this was labor intensive, many trading companies considered the Corinthian option preferable to sending their ships all the way around Achaia by way of the Mediterranean Sea.[30]

It is realistic to argue that Corinth was not only an intellectual municipality, but it was also a place that attracted huge commercial activities. Corinth seems to be a place that had the attention of the ancient world. If people wanted to exceed in their intellectual undertaking or prosper in their business ventures, Corinth was the place to be.

Undisputedly, Corinth had a wide range of things in its favor. An expensive metal compound called Corinthian bronze was produced in the city. The city played host to

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[29] Powell, *Introducing the New Testament,* 291.

[30] Powell, *Introducing the New Testament,* 291-292.

yearly competitions. Many wealthy personalities, both males and females, lived in the city. Corinth seemed to be a progressive, cosmopolitan city that was open to new innovations and accepted people for who they are regardless of their ethnicity, color of their skin, race, or creed. On the downside, the Corinthians had an extravagant lifestyle.

Paul, Silas (sometimes called Silvanua) and Timothy converted some within the city to Christianity (Acts 18:5:2; Cor 1:19). The new convents that joined the church were diverse both morally and collectively. The majority of the new believers were not all Gentiles from the lower class of the city (1 Cor 1: 26; 12 12:2). The gathering of the new congregation met in the house of Gaius (1 Cor 1:14; Rom 16:23). In the midst of the new congregation was Erastus, treasurer of the city of Corinth (Rom 16:23; 2 Tm 4:20). Due to the diverse composition of the congregation – both ethnic and economic – conflict was inevitable.[31]

After the formation of the congregation in Corinth, Paul penned a communication to them (1 Cor 5:9). It seems like this letter did not reach the Corinthian Church. It got lost. However, in this lost letter Paul admonished the congregation to avoid associating with sexually immoral people. While in Ephesus, Paul had some member of the Corinthian Church visited him. Later, he received a communication from the Corinthian Church requesting him to address some issues that had come up in the church.[32]

In response to the reports Paul was getting from the newly formed Corinthian Church, Powell explained that,

> Paul wrote the letter that we know as 1 Corinthians (though it was actually his second letter to the church). He was in Ephesus at the same time (16:8), and our

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[31] Powell, *Introducing the New Testament,* 293.

[32] Powell, *Introducing the New Testament,* 295.

> best guess places the year of composition somewhere between 53 and 57. The letter is co-written with Sosthenes (1:1), who, according to the book of [A]cts, had been beaten publicly by an angry mob when the proconsul Gallio had refused to rule against Paul on his initial visit to the city (Acts 18:12-17).[33]

Paul did not form that Corinthian Church and left it to figure spiritual and ethical issues on its own. He followed the progress of the church; and even at a distance in Ephesus, he was still actively engaged in the growth and development of the Corinthian Church and its membership.

Contextual Element

Daniel Patte argues that "Paul took a risk in preaching the gospel to the Corinthians (Acts 18:1-18) immediately after preaching in Athens (Acts 17:16-33)."[34] The Corinthians terrain was a different place to proclaim the gospel. The society was complex; many people were enlightened; and the culture was diverse. It seems like the greater part of its population were Gentiles who had little or no idea surrounding the life and teachings of Jesus. They were not schooled or fully aware that Jesus' death on the cross for the sins of humanity was a liberating experience. As a result, Paul had to go the extra mile of explaining to them who Christ Jesus is and how the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Equally important, Christ Jesus' death on the cross at Mount Calvary granted Gentiles an equal seat at the table with Jews.

The account of Paul's ministry in Athens and Corinth should not be understood literally. There seems to be a historical nucleus behind Paul's first visit to Corinth in the

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[33] Powell, *Introducing the New Testament,* 295.

[34] Patte, *Global Bible Commentary*, 445.

Acts of the Apostle. Paul had a challenging experience ministering within the Greek culture. This experience further solidifies his resolute to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Greek knowledge (*gnosis*) and Corinthians interchanging Greek knowledge with wisdom (*sophia*) were the most important issues that Paul had to confront in Corinth. The Greek knowledge (*gnosis*) was rooted in the Corinthians way of life, and it led to division in the new community Paul was trying to form (Cor 1:10-3:4). Another challenge was the false assumption surrounding the role of community leaders (Cor 3:5-4:21). There were other divisions in Corinth centering on conflicting ideologies.[35] The by-product of people allowing themselves to be pull by every competing ideology are divisions. This is a classic example that occurred in the Corinthian Church and is occurring in my ministry context for this project.

> Divisions were the order of the day in the Corinthian Church. Patte stated that,
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> In Corinth there were both proto-gnostic Christians as well as libertines. Whereas the former tended towards austerity, the latter practiced extreme licentiousness, including incest (1 Cor 5:1-13) and prostitution (6:12-20). The ascetic proto-gnostic Christians (who were, perhaps, '*over-converted*'), advocated sexual abstinence even as the ideal for married couples (7:1) and encouraged abstinence of other kinds. Paul had to deal with questions about marriage and virginity (7:1-40), about eating or not eating meat offered in the shrines of other religions (8:1-11:1), about church discipline (11:2-34), and about gifts of the Spirit(*charismata*) (12:1-14:40). These preliminary remarks about 1 Corinthians already suggest
> some of the issues the churches in India (and elsewhere) might need to consider regarding their own internal divisions, especially by considering 1 Cor.1:1-45 and 11:17-34.[36]

There were many divisions in the Corinthian Church. However, Paul asserted that it is imperative that they work together amidst their difference in order to make progress.

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[35] Patte, *Global Bible Commentary*, 445-446.

[36] Patte, *Global Bible Commentary*, 446.

Literary Element

Joseph A. Fitzmyer suggests in his book, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* that:

> First Corinthians has to be understood as a 'letter,' and not as an 'epistle,' in the sense in which Deissmann proposed his often-used distinction. 'A letter is something non-literary, a means of communication between persons who are separated from each other. Confidential and personal in nature, it is intended only for the person or persons to whom it is addressed, and not at all for the public or any kind of publicity' (LAE, 218). Its tone, style, and form can be intimate, free, or familiar as conversation itself. An epistle, however, is 'an artistic literary form, just like the dialogue, the oration, or the drama. It has nothing in common with the letter except its form; apart from the one might venture the paradox that the epistle is the opposite of a real letter.'[37]
> With this in mind, the Book of 1 Corinthians is written and constructed more as a

letter than an epistle. Paul found himself away from his work and decided to write admonishing the Church at Corinth to keep the faith and stay focus. The Book of 1st Corinthians is very relevant to this proposed project. Thomas R. Schreiner sheds further light on the relevance of First Corinthians for the present day in his assertion:

> The first letter of Corinthians speaks to us today because the problems addressed still afflict us. Believers are tempted to fawn on the rich, to hobnob with the elite, to curry favour with the powerful and to acclaim intellectuals. Divisions arise because of
> stubborn pride which represents the exaltation of self.[38]

Word Study

The *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary and New Bible Dictionary* define "diversity," "body," "body of Christ," "the Church as the body of Christ" "spirit," and "unity," as the following:

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[37] Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians,* 80.

[38] Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 16.

Diversity: The issues of diversity became critical during the initial spread of the church to the Gentile world (Acts 10:1-48; 15:1-21) and was resolved on the side of unity in Christ (Gal. 3:28). God provides a variety of spiritual gifts to equip and empower His church for service in a diverse world (1 Cor. 12:4:31; Eph. 4:11-13).[39]

Body*:* The NT usage of soma, 'body', keeps close to the Hebrew and avoids the thought of Greek philosophy, which tends to castigate the body as evil, the prison of the soul or reason, which was seen as good. The body of Christ: Jesus Christ had a physical, earthly body which was crucified outside the gates of Jerusalem (Mark 15:20-47; Col. 1:22; Heb. 13:11-12).

The church as the body of Christ*:* The image of the body calls the differing individual members into a unity (1 Cor. 12:12-27); however, the church is not just similar: it is one body, and indeed, one body in Christ (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 10:17). In Christ the body of the church community is incorporated.

The Bible knows of a union with Christ only as faith embodied in the realm of the church community and with the church in the realm of the world.[40].

Spirit: Empowering perspective of human life and the Holy Spirit bringing God's presence and power to bear in the world. A translation of the Hebrew word *ruach* and the Greek work *pneuma*, which can be translated as "wind," "breath," or "spirit" depending upon the context. This is true of both the Spirit of God and the spirit of a human being.[41]

Unity: State of being undivided; having oneness; a condition of harmony. In the Old Testament central to the faith of Israel is the confession of the unity of God: "*Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One*" (Deut. 6:4 HCSB).

Paul spoke repeatedly of believers as "*one body in Christ*," which transcends varieties of giftedness (Rom.12:5-8; 1 Cor.12:13,27-30) and human labels (Gal.3:28; Eph.2:14-15;3:6). For Paul the unity of the church reflects the unity of the Godhead; one God (1 Cor. 12:6), one Lord (Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor.12:5; Eph. 4:5), and one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4,11; Acts 11:17).

As Paul elucidates in verse twelve, he sees the church as a unified unit that is composed of many parts that support the functionality of the church. As the body of

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[39] Chad Brand, Charles Draper, and Archie England, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 432-433.

[40] Brand, Draper, and England *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary,* 229.

[41] Brand, Draper, and England *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary,* 1527.

Christ, the church is the single organism consisting of various parts. The metaphorical expression of the church as the body of Christ serves as an aid in conveying Paul's message of unity to the church. This verse is foundational about this project because it is in this verse where Paul explains the uniqueness of the church considering the diverse generations that make up the church and the harmony that should be seen among them.

It seems as if divisions were the hallmark of the Corinthian Church. Social divisions were having an adverse effect on the growth and development of the church. Few members of the Corinthian Church tried to shape the destiny and how the church would interact with the larger Corinthian society. They overlooked the fact that the other members were just as important as they were. There were divisions in every aspect of the Corinthian Church. However, the church members still pride themselves to be spiritually healthy.[42] This is paradoxical.

Paul encouraged believers in the Corinthian Church to live a life at peace with each other. Members were also admonished to have a realistic view of themselves. Spiritual gifts should be used for the mutual benefit of the community of faith. This attitude should promote unity in the church amidst ethnic and social difference through the sacrament of baptism and the Lord's Supper.[43]

At the beginning of chapter 12, Paul deals with the issue of spiritual gifts in the body of Christ. Paul tries to communicate to the Corinthian Church on how God distributes spiritual gifts to believers within the church. Paul mentioned that some

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[42] John Barton and John Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1109-1110.

[43] John Colet, "12:12-31, One Body with Many Members," Scott M. Manetsch, ed. *1 Corinthians: New Testament Volume 9A* (Chicago, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 281.

spiritual gifts are more visible than others. Some spiritual gifts are more popular than other. However, this does not mean that some spiritual gifts are more essential than others. This explanation is right on point in setting the premise and tone that lead to discussions on the unity and diversity of the church.[44]

In verse twelve Paul highlights the metaphor of the church as a body. Janet Martin Soskice, in her book *Metaphor and Religious Language*, defines metaphor as "that figure of speech where we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another."[45] Paul's metaphorical expression of the church as a body creates a photo of the church for believers and non-believers to comprehend without difficulties. Raymond F. Sacra makes a lot of this idea when he pointed out that,

> Paul's exhortation to the Christian assembly at Corinth is the classic Christian use of the metaphor of the body as a symbol of social unity (cf. Ro 12:4-5; cf. Eph. 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:1-16; Col 1:18-24; 2:17-19; 3:15). The topos of the human body was commonplace among the rhetoricians, philosophers, moralists, and historians contemporary with Paul. It was used by Dionysius, Epictetus, Josephus, Philo, and Plutarch. Paul was a rhetorician in their mold. He used the traditional topos in the context of an extended plea for unity within the assembled community (1 Corinthians 12-14). His use of the image is remarkably similar to that of ancient rhetors. Paul writes about the hands and the feet, the eyes and the ears (vv. 16-17,21).[46]

Barton and Muddiman, in their attempt to expand on the concept of the church as a body, accentuate that:

> The statement in v. 27 that 'you are the body of Christ' does not mean that the church constitutes, in some literal sense, the presence of Christ in the world; rather, the church is (like) a body which belongs to Christ, identified with the risen Christ ('so it is with Christ,' v. 12) but not identical to him. The body was

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[44] Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 1127.

[45] Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1985), 15.

[46] Raymond F. Collins, *Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 454.

> commonly used in antiquity as a metaphor for human society (or for the whole cosmos), as a variegated organism whose
> diverse parts are interdependent.[47]

It is vital to understand the important of what it means as the church as the body of Christ. This is because when the church is seen in this light, it promotes unity among the multiple generations that are integral parts of the church. Every generation within the church is mindful that they coexist with another generation.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 informs the readers that in order for the church to grow and develop holistically, it should function as a unified force. David E. Garland sees the foundational passage of this project as a remarkable unit. He argues that,

> The structure of this unit follows an ABB'A' pattern:
> A The body as one with many members (12:12-14)
> B The inescapable diversity of members within the body (12:15-20)
> B' The inescapable interdependence of members of the body (12:21-26)
> A' The differing functions within the body (12:27-31).[48]

For his part, Fee reinforces this pattern by pointing out that (AB) highlights the diversity, and (B'A') underscores unity.[49]

The structural pattern of the passage under consideration builds on each other. One-unit flows into another to support Paul's view of the church. This arrangement brings the project into clear focus and set proper expectations.

In view of the structure of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Richard B. Hays makes certain assertions that are instructive,

> Paul uses the body image in a somewhat more complicated way to argue for the need of diversity in the body (vv. 14-20) and, at the same time, interdependence

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[47] Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 1127.

[48] David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians,* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 457.

[49] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 601.

> among the members (vv. 21-26). Thus, he employs the analogy not to keep subordinate in their places but to urge more privileged members of the community to respect and value the contributions of those members who appear to be their inferiors, both in social status and in spiritual potency.[50]

The manner in which the phrase the body is used in verse 12 tends to support the themes of unity and diversity. Paul ended verse 12 on a high note.[51] In the same light, Matthew J. M. Coomber, Margaret Aymer, and Hugh Page point out the following,

> The image of 'one body' and the idea of communal benefit are powerful tools of deliberative rhetoric and present an argument that few would want to dispute. Who wants to damage the common body? The first-century-CE Stoic philosopher Epictetus enjoins: 'you are citizen of the world and part of it,' and urges his hearers 'to treat nothing as a matter of private profit . . . but to act like the foot or hand, which, if they had the faculty of reason and understood the constitution of nature, would never exercise choice or desire any other way by reference to the whole (Diatr. 2:10.1-4 (Old father, 275).'[52]

In verse 12 Paul writes about the church as one body with different parts. Here we see the communal benefit that the church stands to reap when unity prevails and is promote among the generations in the church. It seems to be a political concept that Paul borrows to use in his first letter to the Corinthian Church in an attempt of fostering unity within the congregation.

Verse 13 draws attention to the working of the Holy Spirit. Here one can distinguish the genuineness of the unity of the body of Christ to that of a human-made institution. From all indications, the unity in diversity that is mentioned has a weighty spiritual foundation. The Holy Spirit leads in spiritually uniting the church to Christ who

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[50] Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians,* Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching a*nd* Preaching (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 213.

[51] David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), 210.

[52] Matthew J. M. Coomber, Margaret Aymer, and Hugh Page, *Fortress Commentary on the Bible,* Two Volume Set (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014), 454.

is the head of the church. The Spirit is the common denominator that brings all generations in the church together for the singular purpose of glorifying our Creator.[53]

David Prior argues that:

> This particular verse 13 has been the focus of much diverse and contradictory interpretation. Its context makes it clear that there can be no legitimate exegesis which divides Christians into two (or more) groups, let alone into first-class and second-class Christians. This by itself precludes the classical Pentecostal interpretation, which asserts that Paul here describes a two-stage initiation into Christ: regeneration (the first part of the verse) followed by 'the baptism of the Spirit' (the second part).[54]

With this being said, the Spirit does not discriminate. The Spirit provides the level playing field for every part of the body. This enables the church to function and succeed. The Spirit serves as the magnet that brings and holds the body together. As a result, all divisions in the body-the church are eliminated. Richard B. Hays informs us of the following,

> In verse 13 Paul recalls for the Corinthians the basis of their unity in the one body: all of them, at the time of their conversion and initiation into the community of Christ's people, were 'in the Spirit . . . baptized into the body' and 'made to drink of one Spirit.' The Spirit is not the agent who does the baptizing, but the figurative element into which the new converts were immersed, being plunged into new world of Spirit-experience. The two clauses of verse 13 are equally metaphorical, and both refer to this same experience.[55]

Paul explains in verse 14 the composition of the body. The body in its analogical form as utilized by Paul seems to have its roots in Stoic philosophy. Stoic philosophy, to a

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[53] Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, Vol. 7 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2017), 185.

[54] Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 210.

[55] Hays, *First Corinthians*, 214.

large extent, associated the unity of the cosmos to the body. This concept is also seen in ancient political theory that also put side by side the city-state to a body.[56]

Charles R. Swindoll, the founder and senior pastor-teacher of Stonebriar Community Church, asserts the following,

> Next Paul builds on his analogy, and with wit and humor he paints a ludicrous picture of the parts of the human body rebelling against each other. The Corinthian readers immediately would have realized that Paul was indirectly ridiculing their own behavior. Paul basically argues that if our feet and ears could speak, and if they behaved the way the Corinthian believers were behaving in the church, they would say the most outlandish things. They would feel self-conscious about their apparently insignificant roles in the body and wish they could have a more prominent function (12:15-16).[57]

This assertion argued by Swindoll about the Corinthian Church shows this church as a problematic congregation. Members of the Corinthian Church were not working together. Each person or group felt that they were better, wiser, more knowledgeable or had more privilege to the inner working of the church than others. Paul had to arrest this attitude because it was counterproductive to the viability of the church.

In verse 17, Paul explained the significance of diversity within the human body. Garland points out that,

> In 12:17, Paul carries the whimsy further. What if the whole body were the eye? This freakish object would have no sense of smell, no faculty of hearing, no way to perambulate except to roll around, no way to feed itself or to digest. The application may or not have been obvious to the Corinthians.[58]

The understanding here is that each part of the human body plays a major role that contributes to the functionality of the human body. If any part of the human body is

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[56] Garland, *1 Corinthians,* 458.

[57] Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 185.

[58] Garland, *1 Corinthians,* 461.

dysfunctional, the human body is adversely affected.[59] It is clear to see that diversity also brings benefits to the church. Every member of the church will not see things the same way. Some will see the glass half full, while others will see it half empty. This is the beauty that diversity brings to the church.

In verse 18, "the body is internally differentiated in accordance with the design of God."[60] God in God's divine wisdom assigned distinct functions to every part that makes up the human body. This supports the idea that the intergenerational composition of the church should function in various roles in the church. Wolfgang Musculus points out in the commentary, *1 Corinthians: New Testament Volume 9A*, the following:

> God wished there to be diversity of members, each uniquely distinct, and thus he appointed each one of them as he wished. That is why it would be incompatible with his divine intention if all the members of the human body were transformed into the same member, and the whole body comprised in that one member. Paul warns that we should think in a similar way about the members of the church and stop arranging them all into a single member. 'For God arranged the members in the one body, each one of them as he chose.' Therefore, those who are 'feet' in the body of the church, let them recognize that God has wished them to be 'feet,' and has placed them as 'feet' in the body of the church. Consequently, every member of the church should think this way.[61]

Verses 19-20 highlight that the body would have been dysfunctional if it consists of only certain members. Therefore, this was not God's blueprint.[62] God's intention is for the human to have different parts and yet work in coordination. This is a visible photo of how God intends the church to operate. The church is a composite of many subsets.

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[59] Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 185.

[60] Hays, *First Corinthians*, 215.

[61] Scott M. Manetsch*, 1 Corinthians*, *New Testament, Vol. 9A*, Reformation Commentary on Scripture Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 348-349.

[62] Scott Nash, *1 Corinthians*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2009), 363.

However, these subsets are members of the universal set. Therefore, they all should be cognizance for their oneness and work together in unison for the sustainability of the church.

The African Bible Commentary comments on verses 12-26,

> Similarly, there should be no looking down on one another, just as the different parts of the body do not look down on one another (12:21-26). Just as God designed the working of the human body, so he has planned the way that different individuals can contribute to his church. The different parts of a body all need each other, just as individuals Christians need one another. This point is well made by the African proverb, 'The left hand washes the right and the right washes the left.' Even those parts that seem weak are indispensable and are treated with special honor. God's design requires that the different parts of both the physical body and the church be concerned for one another (12:25), for as the African proverb puts it, 'One hand cannot lift a [heavy] load.' Even pain is not meant to be endured in isolation, for God designed the human body and the church to share in the pain and pleasure of all their components (12:26).[63]

In verses twelve through seven, Paul asserted the interdependence and individualization of the body. Both of these roles are vital to the functionary of the body of Christ.[64] Members of the church are also interdependent and individualized. One person can have a particular and another may have a different gift. These are individual gifts. However, these individualized gifts are interdependent on each other for growth and development of the church. Craig S. Keener sums it all up by saying, "Paul concludes the discussion of body parts by reemphasizing that the church consists of one body and many members (12:27), as in 12:12, 14, 20, and proceeds to the gifts again (12:28)."[65]

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[63] Tokunboh Adeyemo, "Unity in Diversity," *Africa Bible Commentary: A One-Volume Commentary Written by 70 African Scholars,* ed. Dachollom Datiri (Nairobi, Kenya: Zondervan Academic, 2006), 1392.

[64] Donald A. Hagner, *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 490.

[65] Craig S. Keener, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians,* New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 104.

Finally, Mark Taylor paints a very impressive picture of the inescapable interdependence of members of the body. He states that,

> In 12:21-27 the personification of body parts continues in order to make a different point. Here the main consideration is the need that members of the body have for one another with an emphasis on the weaker, less honorable, and unrepresentable members of the body. The shameful treatment of the poor at the Lord's Supper by the more distinguished and honorable members of the church (11:17-34; esp.11:22) is undoubtedly in the background and aptly illustrates the necessity of this particular application of the body image. In 12:21-27 Paul makes four key assertions. First, the members of the body need one another (12:21). '*The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!"* And the head cannot say to the feet, '*I don't need you!*' Paul changes the image from the previous paragraph a bit by having one of the sensory organs (eye) speak to one of the external limbs (hand) and replaces the ear with the head that speaks to the feet. Most commentators suggest that the new pairings reflect the hierarchical attitudes of some Corinthians. The head and the eye are obvious metaphors for the supposed higher status members of the church who viewed themselves to be of greater value than others.[66]

In this manner Mark Taylor explains that the church members are inescapable and interdependent. No member is an island. Whether members are inclined to accept this realization or not, their lot in the life of the church is one that is inescapable and interdependent. What matters is that church members' interdependence cannot be over emphasized. Any church that does not work together is in serious trouble.

Conclusion

In the research and study through the exegetical evaluation of 1 Corinthians, I am of the conviction that this scripture is most appropriate in that it supports the purpose and goal of the project. The key concept that runs through 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 is unity among the generations.

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66 Mark Taylor, *1 Corinthians: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 164.

The problem with the Church at Corinth was that people were seeing things differently. They did not agree with each other, but more importantly they did not agree with what God had to say through the Apostle Paul. So, Paul writes to give them God's perspective because God's perspective is always the right way of seeing things.

Whenever there is division in the church, it is almost always because someone thinks they are more important than they are; because they think that they have wisdom, knowledge, and insight, that everyone should listen to them and follow their leadership. When the Holy Spirit is in control there is always unity. In Ephesians 4, Paul makes it abundantly clear that there is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father over all of us.

The Church at Corinth was messed up, to a large degree, because people had taken their eyes off God and had placed it on humans. Instead of following the leadership of the Holy Spirit, they were rallying behind mere men. The problem was that they had an elevated vision of men and a diminished vision of God.

The Corinthian Church had forgotten that Jesus is the foundation of the church and that while He may call men and women to work in His vineyard, the growth only comes because He brings it. God is the owner of the field and the architect of the house; it is He who has redeemed us, who bought us, who purchased us with the blood of Jesus, and He alone retains the right to absolute rule. Paul is reminding them that God is the ultimate reality, not only in the world, but especially in the church.

The division in the Corinthian Church was stupid because it was brought about by an improper view of who God was and what He had given to the church. And they knew better. They knew the truth. Paul had delivered it to them, but they had been drawn away

by the wisdom of the world by the temptation to follow human leaders, by the temptation to use the church of the Lord Jesus Christ for their own ends rather than God's.

Reconciliation prevents conflicts. Social divisions are what necessitate reconciliation. Thus, in the view of the church, reconciliation is an integral part of building peace and reducing the effects of conflict and disunity through the repair and transformation of damaged relationships. In this view, one can agree that the relational dimension of peace building should center on reconciliation, forgiveness, trust building, and future imagining.

Any church, family, society, institution, or community stands firm when united. But if any of these institutions are divided, it will unconditionally fall. Every member of the church is important and has a vital role to play. A church only flourishes when there is unity for it to grow together. Sole ventures are never beneficial to the church. The members of the church can be compared to a puzzle that when one piece is missing, that puzzle cannot be completed. However, with unity the church will unconditionally succeed with the help of God. Therefore, the biblical foundation passage supports the goal and purpose of the project “The Development of A Ministry Model that Promotes Unity Among Multiple Generations in the Church.”

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of the historical foundation chapter is to complete an analysis of a historical movement, figure, or era that is relevant to this doctoral project. This project is titled "The Development of A Ministry Model that Promotes Unity Among Multiple Generations in the Church." The significance associated with this project to the Christian church, regardless of denominational affiliation, is enormous. This project lays out the methodology and/or framework for promoting unity among multiple generations in the church that will directly have positive effect on its growth and development.

The church as an organism is a living institution that has been through several challenges. Some of these challenges have had negatively affected and continue to have adverse effects on the church. One of the significant challenges of the church has been fostering unity among the multiple generations that make up the church. The church from its early existence to present has had many great personalities that have promoted unity in the church. However, for the purpose of this historical foundation chapter, I will examine the life, role, writings, and philosophical disposition of Saint Cyprian who was the Bishop of Carthage. This historical foundation chapter discusses how Saint Cyprian's viewpoint of unity strengthen and buttress the reflective development of this project.

Saint Cyprian life was marked by honor, distinction, and commitment to serve the church regardless of the challenges that he had to deal with in the church and the community in which the church existed. Mount Zion AME Church has its challenges as the church during the day of Saint Cyprian. He was a classic and pivotal example of the tenacity it takes to promote unity amidst uncertainty in the church. It seems like Cyprian is second in line to Tertullian as the most significant and renowned Latin-speaking leader in the history of the church. The thoughts of Cyprian had a major impact on Saint Augustine of Hippo, and by extension, all Western Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church in particular. Saint Cyprian was more of a practical theologian and drew his theological assumptions from Scripture, Roman law, and realistic pastoral assessments. He stood for what he believed regardless of the disagreements that were against him. He also has a major place in the history of the church because he was the first martyr-bishop in the history of the North African Church.[67]

François Decret and Edward Smither mentioned in their book, *Early Christianity in North Africa*, that "Cyprian does not seem to have had a personal relationship with Tertullian, his 'master,' who probably dies around 222."[68] Equally important, Edwina Murphy mentioned in her book, *The Bishop and the Apostle: Cyprian's Pastoral Exegesis of Paul*, that Cyprian was very concern about promoting unity in the church. Murphy explained that,

> This increased emphasis on unity is evident in Erik Walter's examination of the term 'unitas,' from its first appearance in Varro to its use by Lactantius on the eve of the Constantinian revolution. According to his study, 101 of its 233 appearance

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[67] John D. Woodbridge, *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), 59.

[68] François Decret and Edward Smither, *Early Christianity in North Africa* (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 2009), 70.

> are formed in Cyprian. Cyprian is in continuity with the classical meaning which Tertullian applies to Trinity, and Cyprian applies to the Church. The opposite of this unity is schism.[69]

Even though Cyprian may not have known Tertullian personally, nevertheless, he was influence by Tertullian's ideologies surrounding the unity of the Trinity. Cyprian went further to extend the unity of the God Head to the church.

In addition to the earlier mentioned purpose of this historical foundation work, I will examine the formation of the African Church, then move to the life of Saint Cyprian beginning from his birth into an affluent family to his practice of law and rhetoric. It is vital to scrutinize the life of Saint Cyprian because it will help us understand his upbring. Additionally, the cause and effect of the Decian persecution will be scrutinized. Also, Saint Cyprian's desire to become a bishop, his writings, his image of the church, and advocacy for unity in the church will be investigated.

Woodbridge, in his book *Great Leaders of the Christian Church,* posits that "Cyprian's views were influential in future generations because of his prestige as a martyr bishop. Both Augustine of Hippo and his Donatist opponents looked upon him as their spiritual father."[70] Further, Saint Cyprian understanding of church unity, reconciliation, forgiveness, teachings on the importance of unity in the church and its episcopacy will be analyzed to some extent. It is through these in-depth investigations of Saint Cyprian's life, ministry, and service to humanity that I will meet the requirement of what is expected in this historical foundation chapter and doctoral project.

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[69] Edwina Murphy, *The Bishop and the Apostle: Cyprian's Pastoral Exegesis of Paul*, Studies of the Bible and Its Reception, Vol. 13 (Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 2018), 67.

[70] Woodbridge, *Great Leaders of the Christian Church,* 62.

Formation of the African Church

According to François Decret and Edward Smither, Christianity in African seems to have started after the apostolic period. This is because there is no evidence that an apostle visited any region in Africa to preach the gospel to the people. The birthplace of the African Church is Carthage. However, it is hard to pin down the exact time the church was formed. Due to the location of Carthage in North Africa in regard to Europe, the city is believed to be where Christianity started. Nevertheless, it is still unclear whether or not Christianity came from Rome or the East. It may have just come from both locations at the same time. On the other hand, Italian migrants, merchants, and soldiers were the major spreaders of the gospel in Africa.[71]

Early Life of Cyprian

Woodbridge highlighted that most likely Cyprian was born in the North African city of Carthage approximately CE 200, to a wealth family that was holding religious beliefs other than the main world religion at the time of Christianity. Thascius Caecillus Cyprianus was his name at birth. He was trained in rhetoric and law. Before his conversion from sin in repentance and turning to Christ Jesus by faith around CE 246, very little is known about this unmarried church leader. It seems like two years after Cyprian conversion to Christianity, he was elected bishop to head the church of Carthage.[72]

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[71] Decret and Smither, *Early Christianity in North Africa,* 10-13.

[72] Woodbridge, *Great Leaders of the Christian Church,* 60.

After Cyprian conversion to Christianity, he made a solemn promise to be a celibate. He was generous to also give up his riches and material processions to charity. He lived a decent and simple lifestyle. Regardless of not growing up in the church, he was a luminous communicator of biblical truths and a force to reckon with in the church. He maintained his relationship with the pagan community in Carthage. Cyprian was an intellectual and a prolific writer. Additionally, he was both an exceptional administrator and theologian. These skills made him one of the best religious leaders of the Carthage Church. He also supported Spain and Gaul churches that needed counsel. Cyprian worked tirelessly for the growth and development of the clergy and general population of the region of Carthage.[73] Thascius Caecillus Cyprianus served diligently as the episcopal leader of the Carthage Church from CE 248 until his unfortunate martyrdom in 258.[74]

Cyprian was both an outstanding theologian and administrator. He gave first-class leader to the church at Carthage. His capacity to influence the character, development, or behavior of people was not only felt in Africa but also Spain and Gaul. He worked tirelessly administering the church to ensure that unity prevail among the members. He knew that the Church of Carthage could only progress when its members support each other ministry assignment. He was an astute theologian. His writings were pastoral in nature and reflected his desire for church members to be at peace with themselves and work together as a team with single objective. One of the importance characteristics of Cyprian was that he was afrocentric to his core by promoting the African tradition.[75]

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[73] Decret and Smither, *Early Christianity in North Africa*, 69-73.

[74] J. Patout Burns, "Cyprian of Carthage," *The Expository Times* 120, no. 10 (July 2009): 469–77, https://doi.org/10.1177/0014524609106579.

[75] Decret and Smither, *Early Christianity in North Africa*, 72.

Election as Bishop

In CE 248, Thascius Caecillus Cyprianus election as bishop of the Carthaginian Church was due to the public outcry, and he reluctantly took the position. The presbyters wanted a more season person as bishop. The presbyters' reservation was genuine. This is because Thascius Caecillus Cyprianus was new to the Christian Church. He was inexperience in church matters despite the high level of secular brilliancy Cyprian would have brought to the office; nevertheless, he was still struggling to understand the doctrines and working of the church. On the other hand, the non-clergy members of the church of Carthage overwhelmingly got him elected regardless of the dissatisfaction of the presbyters. It is logical to presuppose that the laity of the church was unsatisfied with how the presbyters were running the church. Upon unenthusiastically taking office, Cyprian served as bishop of both Carthage and the entire Latin Africa.[76]

J. Patout Burns sheds light on this subject in a scholarly article entitled "Cyprian of Carthage," published in *The Expository Times*:

> Two years later, the first systematic imperial persecution of religious dissent shattered the peace and unity of the Christian church. Bishops were executed or exiled; some Christians stood fast and suffered; others failed under trial; many escaped by subterfuge or flight. The church divided over how to reintegrate the apostates and schismatics, and to control the confessors. Renewed persecution threatened and then materialized. Through the decade of his episcopate, Cyprian organized and guided the North African church to face these challenges. Shortly after his own execution in September 258, his martyrdom was recorded, his life written, his treaties and letters collected. He quickly became the venerated patron of African Christianity and his thought its guide in negotiating the transition from persecute to established church in the fourth century.[77]

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[76] J. Patout Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, Routledge Early Church Monographs (London, UK: Routledge, 2002), 1.

[77] Burns, "Cyprian of Carthage," 469.

The leadership that Cyprian exhibited was remarkable in the church after the persecution. He stands out as the most renowned Christian leader in the African church. His teaching and support for unity in the church cannot be overemphasized. He worked through a crisis to keep the church united and focused on its purpose.

The Decian Persecution

The year AD 250 was a difficult point in time for the church in the geographical region where Cyprian was serving as bishop. The church found itself in disarray, confusion, disunity, and distrust of its leadership. These adverse incidents in the church were the hallmarks of this period. The complication for the church is evidence by Emperor Decius efforts to systemically persecute Christians as a means of a rejuvenate previous Rome significance. Citizens were given a certificate after they had made sacrifice to the Roman gods. The tension in the church was so grave to the extent that Cyprian went into hiding leading the church from a distance. Eventually, the persecution came to an end in AD 251 upon the death of Emperor Decius in a battle. At this juncture, Cyprian returned from hiding to reunite and establish order in the church of Carthage. Church members that succumbed to worshipping Roman gods wanted readmission in the church under a general pardon. Church members that refused to submit to Emperor Decius decrees of worshipping Roman gods started to issue forgiveness after the persecution. The church was in confusion. The task that Cyprian had at hand was to bring back order, unity, and oneness to the church of Carthage and its surrounding regions.[78]

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[78] Woodbridge, *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*, 60.

Upon Cyprian return from hiding after the persecution, he had to build up a team of committed people to help lead the fragmented church. Mount Zion AME Church could also train its members of all generations to use a collaboration concept to buttress it ministry assignments. For his part, Cyprian employed a practical and workable approach to fully deal with the situation. Cyprian's view on those in the church that compromised their faith was that,

> God can and will forgive; where there is true repentance, demonstrated in devotion and good works, God can note what the confessors recommended and the bishops judge to be right. That illustrates a significant feature of Cyprian's view: the only proper earthly judge of such matters is the bishop. It took effect insofar as the book On the Lapsed was probably presented at the council in Carthage in 251.[79]

This is evidence of the position of Cyprian that the church of Carthage was divided and there was a need to promote unity among the multiple generations that made up the church. He pointed out that God is the only source of forgiveness when people truly repent.

Persecution and Schism in the Carthage Church

The persecution that unfolded in the church led to the schism. The schism being referred to here is the confusion that erupted in the Carthaginian and it is surrounding churches at the end of the Decian persecution. Geoffrey D. Dunn, in an academic article titled "Heresy and Schism According to Cyprian of Carthage," asserts "schism was a withdrawing that could happen even if a person were to remain in one faith and in the same tradition."[80] It seems like the leadership in the Church of Carthage used the terms

[79] Stuart George Hall, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 85-86.

[80] Geoffrey D. Dunn, "Heresy and Schism According to Cyprian of Carthage," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 55, no. 2 (2004): 557-558.

schism and heresy interchangeably to mean the same.[81] This dilemma in the church may had compelled Cyprian to reflect on the nature of the church. The legacy of Cyprian is centered around his views of the nature and structure of the church. His ecclesiology was admirable. He utilized models, images, exegesis, and other ideas to promote unity in the church by employing Pauline writings. Cyprian used Pauline imageries to explain the unity of the church.[82]

The Decian persecution had an adverse effect on the unity of the Christian church in Carthage and other regions. Therefore, Cyprian had to deal with four issues in order to restore unity in the church. Cyprian tried to unearth the root reasons for the persecution and kept away from holding any one responsible. Holding church members accountable for their action during the persecution would have been counterproductive to the unity he was seeking. Cyprian's aim was to promote unity among the various generations in the church. He exercised authority over the confessors who were the most troublesome group that existed in the church. Cyprian also tried to work through and with all of the factions that were creating division in the church to bring about reconciliation and forgiveness.[83] At Mount Zion AME Church, no generation is being persecuted. However, the refusal of some adult members to lend a helping hand to their partners' ministry assignment had as adverse effect on the unity of the local church.

After the Decian persecution of the church of Carthage, healings were needed because uncountable incidents had occurred to and among the members. Church

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[81] Dunn, "Heresy and Schism According to Cyprian of Carthage," 551-554.

[82] Murphy, *The Bishop and the Apostle,* 72-81.

[83] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop,* 77.

members needed to reconcile and forgive each other. Walter Wink, in his book *When the Power Fall: Reconciliation in the Healing of Nations*, persuasively argue that reconciliation goes beyond forgiveness. This is because forgiveness most often is one-sided; reconciliation is constantly shared in that one can forgive without the other party's knowledge. On the other hand, reconciliation is more complex. It requires both parties to mutually forgive each other and walk into an ordinary future together.[84] The reconciliation and forgiveness that Wink speaks about here is hard work. This was the kind of reconciliation and forgiveness that the church of Carthage and other neighboring churches needed to move forward in promoting unity in the aftermath of the brutal persecution and disunity in the church. Mount Zion AME Church also needs healing and forgiveness as the church of Carthage to end or reduce the family drama among adult church members.

George Hall Stuart, in his book *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church,* highlighted that the schisms or splits that happened in the church inspired Cyprian to write on the unity of the Church. Cyprian's essay on the *Unity of the Church* was published in AD 251. One may assume that in the mind of Cyprian, the word "unity" denotes uniqueness and is not separated into parts or pieces. In Cyprian's view, any form of division in the church is a sin. The unity of the church is only found in the single universal church worldwide. Cyprian formulated the analogy by comparing the many rays of the sun to the one sun and the branches of the tree to one root to that of the church with many members.[85]

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[84] Walter Wink, *When the Power Fall: Reconciliation in the Healing of Nations* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 14.

[85] Stuart, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church,* 89-90.

Synopsis of Cyprian Theology

Cyprian read the Bible in a legalistic way. Therefore, one can assume that his theology was more toward adherence to moral law rather than his personal religious faith. He was influence by the theological and philosophical ideals of Tertullian. He was a charismatic leader who place high magnitude on the gifts of the spirit. Cyprian compared Israel to the church. Based upon his reading of the Old Testament, he held the church in high esteem. In opposition to the confessors, he argued that the church is God's institution on earth that preaches salvation. He also underscored that only the church has the authority to administer the sacraments. This is because there is only one unified church in Christ. He advocated for infant baptism administer by authorized members of clergy. Cyprian held in high respect martyrs and those who willingly practice celibacy.[86]

Burns suggests that the theological issues that capture Cyprian's attention were relatively narrow. He had practical day-to-day issues to solve. As a result, he focused on addressing the conflicts and disunity in the church. The three theological topics that drew his attention were the unity and unicity of the church, the purity of the church, and the efficacy of the church's ritual actions.[87] This historical foundation chapter deals primarily with his theology surrounding the unity of the church as it relates to ministry assignments because it is directly related to the project.

Cyprian Writings

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[86] Woodbridge, *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*, 62.

[87] Burns, "Cyprian of Carthage," 470.

Cyprian was an exceptional writer who wrote in practical terms. His writings helped to foster unity and oneness in the church of Carthage and other places. In discussing Cyprian's writing, Burns highlighted that,

> According to the list provided by the deacon Pontius in the *Life of Cyprian*, he wrote twelve treatises, two of which are collections of scriptural texts. *To Donatus* was prepared for a friend shortly after Cyprian's conversion. *On the Dress of Virgins* followed, perhaps to deal with a problem of inappropriate conduct reflected in *Letter* 4. *On the Lapsed* was critical for the success of his episcopate; it addressed the necessity of repentance by those who had sinned by failing to confess Christ during the Decian persecution. On *Unity of the Catholic Church* followed shortly thereafter, in response to the schism created by clergy supporting immediate reconciliation of all the fallen.[88]

Here it is clear that Cyprian in his writings discussed the significance of unity and saw reconciliation as the means of keeping the church united. His writings concentrated on various issues that were challenging the unity of the church. Given Cyprian's argument that reconciliation united the church, Mount Zion AME Church must take reconciliation very seriously in that one can suggest that the generations may not be supporting each other ministry assignments due to unreconciled issues.

Cyprian Image of the Church

Cyprian used images from Song of Songs to support his representation of the church. In addition to these images, he drew from the Pauline Epistles to explain his understanding of church unity and the importance of the church as it relates to baptism. Cyprian used the phrase "being clothes with Christ" about three times in discussing the

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[88] Burns, "Cyprian of Carthage," 470.

unity of the church.[89] This phrase denotes that Christ is in the church and the church is in Christ.

Edwina Murphy cited that one of the major images that Cyprian held about the church was seeing the church as the bride of Christ. Murphy pointed out that one of the basis of Cyprian's position was formulated from Eph 5:31-32:

> Now the Apostle Paul says: 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and they will be two in one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.' The apostle thereby bears witness to the indissoluble unity of Christ and the church. Anyone who does not dwell within the church, the bride of Christ, cannot dwell with Christ.[90]

The unity of the church has its roots in Christ. Christ is the source of the church's existence. Christ has a direct relationship to the church. As such, the church cannot be fragmented with people working against each other. Therefore, anyone who refuses to keep the unity of the church intact cannot be a follower of Christ. It can also be said that any member of the local church who does not cooperate in implementing the various ministry assignments of the local church cannot be a follower of Christ. Good followers of Christ do all they can to avoid disunity and division in the local church.

Saint Cyprian: The Unifier of the Church

Cyprian was one of the first leaders of the African Church that was concern about the unity of the church. Donald K. McKim, in his book *Theological Turning Points : Major Issues in Christian Thought,* stated that "Cyprian's strong stand for the unity of the church is rooted in Scriptures such as Matthew 16:18–19, John 20:20–23, and Ephesians

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[89] Murphy, *The Bishop and the Apostle,* 78.

[90] Murphy, *The Bishop and the Apostle,* 80.

4:4–6."[91] In examining these scriptural passages, it was discover that one deals with the foundation upon which the church was built; the other speaks about forgiveness, and the last one reinforces the oneness of the body of Christ. The various generations of the local church must be trained to know that Christ is the source of unity in the church. If a member has issues with another member, they might not be willing to support that person's ministry assignment. Unity breathes togetherness in the local church.

Cyprian published an essay in the spring of AD 251 entitled "On the Unity of the Church." This dissertation was the most outstanding of all his writings. Because of the treatise importance, it was read in AD 251 at the Council of Carthage. The holistic personality of Cyprian was captured in the work. Cyprian gained the inspiration to pen this work based on the schisms that the church had experience and was dealing with. Cyprian addressed in his writings meaningful issues that promoted unity not only in the church at Carthage but also churches across the world. Cyprian was a champion for unity in the church. He argued that unity is the foundation of the Christian community of faith.[92]

Decret and Smither, in speaking about Cyprian's position on unity in the church, underscore that,

> Cyprian believed that unity, a value that he championed until his own martyrdom, ought to be a bishop's chief concern, because unity was the primary characteristic of the Christian faith. Cyprian wrote, 'Can he who is not bound to the unity of the church, believe himself to be bound to the faith? Can one who opposes the church be certain that he is also in the church? One cannot have God even be a martyr if he is not in the church.' Cyprian was convinced that outside of the church, falsehood and impiety reigned, and that salvation could only be experienced within the context of the church: 'We cannot have God for our father without the

[91] Donald K. McKim, *Theological Turning Points: Major Issues in Christian Thought* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1988), 53-54.

[92] Decret and Smither, *Early Christianity in North Africa*, 72-73.

> church as our mother. He, who does not maintain unity, fails to keep God's law and rejects faith in the Father and the Son.' As signs pointing to the Lord's imminent return abounded – a millenarian position already defended by Tertullian – those outside the fold were urged to return immediately to communion or risk perishing. Cyprian argued that church unity should be affirmed on several levels.[93]

Every living thing on earth has a head. The church being an organism has both an eternal and temporary head. The eternal head is Christ Jesus, and the temporary head is the earthly leadership that gives direction to the church. The mortal leadership of the church must be the championed for unity among the multiple generations in the church. Cyprian stands on unity and this assertion in this regard will really support the purpose of this project and intent.

The council of African bishops upheld Cyprian's position on the unity of the local church. Cyprian's theory of unity stood the test against the Novatianist and laxist aim of formulating contending communities of faith. The unity theory kept the lapsed in checked. It also pointed out the foundational unity of the church as having a specific segment of people with communal partnership having Christ as its source with the acknowledgement of the bishop. The welfare of the church in general takes precedence over the individual needs and desires.[94] This principle of Cyprian's unity theory that advocate for wellbeing of the whole can be compelled to the multiple generations in the church working together for the common good and sustainability of the church in general.

> J. Patout Burns, in his book *Cyprian the Bishop,* persuasively highlighted that,
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> Cyprian provided two different justifications for the unity of the local church: the indivisible unity of the community and the unity deriving from its leader. The bishop elected leader of the church was actually a successor to Peter, upon whom

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[93] Decret and Smither, *Early Christianity in North Africa*, 73.

[94] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop,* 98.

> Christ had founded the unity of the church and through whom each church received its power to sanctify by forgiving sins. The bishop must not act independently of either the people in his own church or the leaders of other churches. Cyprian's people believed that they had the right to be consulted and heard both on major policy changes and in significant decisions about persons, such as the selection of offices and the admission of penitents. The selection and installation of a bishop demonstrated that no community was autonomous; it must coordinate its decisions and practices with those of other churches.[95]

Cyprian's view that elected bishops are successors of Peter is not one that I support. Elected bishops in the early church and now are not successors of Peter. In the Gospel of Saint Matthew 16:18, Jesus says "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church and the power of death . . . ." It is worth noticing that several church controversies have raged around this verse. The Roman Catholic Church contends that with this pronouncement Jesus declared that he would build his church on Peter, the rock. This supports the Roman Catholic view of Apostolic Succession. The Protestant church claims that it was not Peter, to whom Jesus referred, but to Peter's confession. Here Jesus is only honoring Peter's faith and confession.[96]

In examining Matthew 16:18b "I will build my church" with the lenses of textual criticism, you will notice that the subject of this sentence: who is it that says he will build the church? The elite, cream of the crop, restricted builder of the church is the Living Christ Jesus. I fully and unconditionally agree with Bruner that "according to the exact picture used in this sentence, it is not Peter or other Christocentric like him who build

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[95] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop,* 99.

[96] Frederick Dale Brunner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eedmans Publishing Company, 2004), 127.

Christ's church; rather, it is Jesus himself who uses Christocentric disciples and their pointing and who turns all such pointing into persons mortar."[97]

Equally important, it is undebatable that one of the most outstanding biblical images of the church is "building on the rock" as articulated by Christ to Peter in Matthew 16:18-20. Here we find a direct connection between the picture of a building to that of the *ekklesia*. According to Stanley J. Grenz, in his extraordinary book *Theology for the Community of God*, "the New Testament employment of *ekklesia* provides an important link between the church of Jesus Christ and the Old Testament nation of Israel."[98] Church members must all be involved in the operations of the church. The voices of people in the church must be heard by the leaders. The leader of the church should champion the unity agenda of the various generations in the church.

Burns goes further in discussing Cyprian's view of unity and mentioned that,

> The community itself was established as indivisible through the divine will. Like the tunic worn by Christ, the church could not be torn apart and divided into pieces. As the flock of Christ, it must be united and thus have only one pastor in each town. The unity of the members of the community with one another was sacramentally symbolized in their union with Christ in the one loaf and one cup of the Eucharistic celebration.[99]

Again, the unity of the church is being emphasized. It seems as if there is no way the church can be fruitful on this side of heaven without unity among the multiple generations that made up the church.

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[97] Brunner, *Matthew,* 128.

[98] Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 605.

[99] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop,* 99.

The primary focus of Cyprian throughout his tenure as bishop of Carthage was the unity of the church. He incorporated all generations of the church in fostering this unity. He found innovative ways to promote unity in the church after the Decian persecution by putting in place a methodology wherein the lapsed could reconcile with the church. He compared the unity that exists between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit to the unity that should subsist and be practiced between and among members of any given church. He maintained that only one person, the recognized bishop, can be the physical symbol of unity in the unity.[100]

Murphy made clear that Cyprian's quest for unity was holistic in that Cyprian also advocated for a unity of thought and harmony in *De unitate* where he uses 1 Cor 1:10: "I beseech you brethren by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no schisms among you; but that you knit together, having the same mind and the same judgement." He follows by citing Eph. 4:2b-3 on the bond of peace, asking, "Do you think a man can hold his own or survive, when he leaves the Church and sets up a new place and a separate home for himself?"[101] It is apparent that Cyprian wanted people to stay connected to the church in the body, mind, soul, and spirit. One form of connection to the church may lead to another. When people see themselves as working together with a common purpose, it promotes unity.

Cyprian understood that in the absence of love, unity cannot be promoted and cannot exist in the church. Therefore, Murphy did a good work explaining in details how Cyprian approach the subject of by saying the following. In *De zelo et livore*, Cyprian

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[100] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop,* 151.

[101] Murphy, *The Bishop and the Apostle,* 95-96.

emphasized the need to be free from envy, alluding to Paul's words in 1 Cor 13:2-3 that not even faith, alms, or martyrdom will avail those without, love. He then cites verse 4 and continues by quoting 1 Cor 3:1-3 in full: "Love is magnanimous, love is kind, love does not envy, teaching doubtless, and showing that whoever is magnanimous, and kind, and averse from jealousy and envy, such a one can maintain love." Moreover, in another place, when he was advising that the person who has already become filled with the Holy Spirit and is a child of God by heavenly birth, one should observe nothing but spiritual and divine things; he lays it down and says:

> Indeed, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but as fleshly – mere babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not meat, for you were not yet ready. In fact, you are still fleshly. While there is still jealousy, and contention, and strife you, are you not fleshly, walking according to human ways?[102]

Cyprian's position that unity is one of the by-products of love seems to be reasonable and practical. Love covers a whole range of things. Jealousy and envy have adverse effect on the unity of the church. Therefore, where there is love, peace exists, and people work together as a united force.

In addition to love promoting unity in the church, Cyprian argued that patience is also necessary for unity, peace, hope, and faith to flourish in the church. Various generations in the church must be patient with each other. The virtue of patience allows church members to accept other church members' views and exercise tolerance in their interactions for the growth and development of the church. The virtue of patience helps keep multiple generations in the church from becoming angry and avoid rivalry among them.[103]

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[102] Murphy, *The Bishop and the Apostle,* 132-133.

[103] Murphy, *The Bishop and the Apostle,* 133.

Murphy did a nice work in connecting Cyprian's perception of members in the church exercising patience to that of God in the following way,

> God's patience results in eternal life for these who repent; those who refuse God's mercy receive the punishment they deserve. In *De lapsis*, Cyprian emphasizes that it is not the confessors, but only Christ who can grant mercy: 'Sins committed against Him can be cancelled by Him alone who bore our sins and suffered for us, by Him whom god delivered up for our sins.' The bishop must be confident that the requests of the martyrs are in accordance with the one who will judge.[104]

Even though church members and followers of Christ are condemned and guilty of the sins committed against God, it is because of God's patience that church members have the opportunity to inherit eternal life.

Furthermore, Cyprian went on to stress that Christian unity (*concordia*) grows out of corporate prayer. Decret and Smither, quoting from *Cyprian Letter,* said that Cyprian encouraged church leader that,

> Every one of us should pray to God not for himself only, but for all his brothers, just as the Lord taught us to pray. His instructions are not for each of us to pray privately but he bade that when we pray we should do so with united hearts in communal prayer for everyone. If the Lord shall observe that we are humble and peaceable, joined in union together, fearful of his wrath, chastened and amended by the present sufferings, He will make us safe from the assaults of the enemy.[105]

From all indications, prayer is one of the keys to maintain unity among the generation in the church. When these generations pray together, it will create a stronger bind among them and a sense of oneness. It goes without saying that a church that prays together always hold together.

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[104] Murphy, *The Bishop and the Apostle,* 134-135.

[105] Decret and Smither, *Early Christianity in North Africa,* 73.

Collaboration Arrangement

Bishops were encouraged to collaborate in the attempt to successfully execute their responsibilities in the church. Any form of breakdown in compromise in the church will adversely affect the unity of the church. The African church work together to promote unity among themselves. The African church relying on Holy Scripture made reconciliation among faithful and unfaithful church members (the lapsed) one of their foundation goals. The corporate action of the church was always used in the making of decisions for the overall health and sustainability of the church.[106]

Conclusion

After an extensive research and analysis of Saint Cyprian, I am convinced that Cyprian had a colorful personality that was needed by the church at that time in its existence. His writings surrounding church unity are sound and theological grounded. He was a stupendous practical theologian. To a large extent, he tried to practice what he believed and wrote. He focused most of his attention on issues that unify and not divide the church. He may have realized that without unity in the church, the church will find itself in crisis. Therefore, he promoted reconciliation and forgiveness among church members as a practical leader.

I think he focused on reconciliation and forgiveness that leads to unity in the church; this was admirable. This is because reconciliation is not a simple undertaking to realize. Hurts and divisions in the church or society sometimes go deep and cannot be wiped out unless mindful and significant steps are taken to heal memories. Individuals

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[106] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop,* 151-153.

who have been seriously affected, especially directly by conflicts, are deeply hurt. Discussions about forgiveness and reconciliation to them will have no meaning unless they know that their hurts are genuinely acknowledged and not denied. Moreover, adequate measures should be taken to ensure that justice is done to those who offended them.

The totality of Saint Cyprian personality is centered around promoting unity in the church. He was able to achieve, somehow his mission, of unifying the church. It is my utmost intention to teach multiple generations in the church on how to promote unity among themselves in the church. It is beneficial to the church when the various generations in the church work together for the single purpose of uplifting the church and its mission.

I am certain that Saint Cyprian's life, writings, and teachings do support the foundation of the doctoral project "The Development of A Ministry Model that Promotes Unity Among Multiple Generations in the Church." Saint Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, is admired for unity in the church. Being championed as a leader is an obtainable goal. This philosophy is in line with the objective of this doctoral project. In all sincerity, I believe when the various generations in the church work together, it promotes unity in the body of Christ and the church is in a better position to execute the mission for which it was established.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Christian theology teaches that the church has two primary characteristics: universal and local. The universal church is the complete body of all those who are reconciled to God in Christ in any place and time (Mt 16:18, NRSV). On the other hand, the local church is a group of believers or people who meet at a particular time in a particular place to worship. This expression of the local church is common in the New Testament Church (Rom 16:15; 1 Cor 1:2). The concentration of this theological foundation chapter is the local church.

The local church is composed of people, and people are imperfect. The phrasing "local church" and "community of faith" will be used interchangeably throughout this paper. It is essential to note that one of the many shortcomings or pitfalls of imperfect people is their inborn tendency to compete. For this reason, information and education are the primary gateways to flawed people in the liberation and struggles that exist among the multiple generations in the local church.

Practical theology equips deficient people to minister effectively to other inadequate people. In doing so, religious truth, in light of the spiritual needs of flawed people, has to be taken into consideration. Therefore, this theological foundation chapter

will focus mainly on practical theology; however, few insights from pastoral theology, which is a branch of practical theology, will be discussed.

In this theological foundation chapter, I defined practical and pastoral theologies and how they directly relate to the research project. This chapter will also unearth how God empowers imperfect people of all generations in the local church to work together in unity for the upliftment of the kingdom of God on earth. In addition, this chapter will explore some practical and pastoral approaches to get the multiple generations in the local church to work together to complement and or supplement the efforts of the other generation instead of working against each other in the implementation of their ministry assignments.

Practical theology will be viewed from the perspectives of the descriptive-empirical task that involves priestly listening and the pragmatic task that focus on servant leadership. This work will also deal with practical theology from the theological standpoint. It is necessary to discuss practical theology from these viewpoints because the study of practical theology is appropriate in the local church or the local community of faith. The study of practical theology is not only necessary and significant for the community of faith but also uplifts the mission and purpose of the local church on this side of heaven.

Pastoral theology will be examined from the point of view of what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called the beloved community. The multiple generations that make up the church are people who are faced with oppressions ranging from spiritual, religious, economical, to sociopolitical challenges and or inequalities just to name a few. The study of pastoral theology is relevant and essential for the imperfect makeup of the local church

because the leader of the local community of faith plays a pivot role in promoting unity among the various generations in the church.

The goal of the theological foundation chapter is to examine the movement and theological themes of practical theology in details and pastoral theology on the surface. The practical theology concept was formulated by a practicing Christian by the name of Richard R. Osmer. On the other hand, Donald M. Chinula is the person behind the pastoral theology model.

Theological Perspectives: Richard R. Osmer's Assertions

Richard R. Osmer builds his views of practical theology around the following core tasks of practical theological interpretations: "What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond?"[107] In the attempt to promote unity among the multiple generations in the implementation of ministry assignments, it is essential that serious attention be given to answering these questions. Questions that begin with "what" are attempts to ascertain information surrounding issues. Questions that begin with "why" are attempts to unearth the reasons behind happenings. Questions that begin with "how" borders on finding a solution to solve a problem. When these questions are answered, we will be in a better position to deal with the tensions that are existing among the multiple generations in the local church.

What is going on among the generations is that they do not support each other ministry assignments. This is going on because of the lack of training. The ages ought to

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[107] Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 4.

be supporting each other in ministry assignments. The generations in the local church might get a response in the affirmative if they are educated about the benefits that the local church stands to reap from this ministry cooperation.

Richard R. Osmer is of the deepest conviction that the manner in which each of these questions are answered have direct relationship to four foundational tasks of practical theological understanding and presupposition. These four tasks are as follows:

> The descriptive-empirical task. Gathering information that helps us discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts. The interpretive task. Drawing on theories of the arts and sciences to better understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring. The normative task. Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from 'good practice.' The pragmatic task. Determining strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and emerging into a reflective conversation with the 'talk back' emerging when they are enacted.[108]

These practical theological tasks make the study of this concept meaningful and will add momentous value to this theological foundational chapter. These tasks are very useful in addressing most of the challenges that may come about when the various generations in the local church do not support each other ministry assignments. They will help in formulating a way forward when multiple generational issues that lead to disunity in the local church are active. For many church members such as myself, we are often opinionated on the directions that the local church should go. I believe that church folks are some of the most difficult people to lead and interact with on all levels. The differences that local church members of all ages bring to their ministry assignments shine a light on the beauty of the local church.

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[108] Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

Another reason that practical theology is important regarding the local church is because of the communal nature of the community of faith. James N. Poling and Donald E. Miller assert in their book, *Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry,* that:

> The heart of Christian life for the individual is shared life with other believers. This shared life includes patterns of interaction with common meanings which are understood theologically. That is, the church is a community which is constantly interpreting its life within its ongoing relationship with God. The disciplines of theology have developed over many years as the history of the church's interpretation of its life.[109]

This statement makes the study of this theological theme relevant and will add considerable value to this work. This statement expresses the need for all generations that the church is composed to know that the purpose of God is that all will work together in unity for the growth and development of the community of faith.

All of the people that form a part of the various generations in my context are African American and those people are opposed by the national institutionalize systems that are in place. Pastoral theology will be helpful to this work to assist these generations with their identity crisis and in their identity formation. It can be assumed that the different generations in the local church are not supporting each other ministry assignments because they do not understand their identity. Donald M. Chinula points out in his book, *Building King's Beloved Community,* that,

> The issue of how oppression might influence identity formation is intimately connected with the question of how oppression might affect the core of personality, for identity formation is a central part of personality and its development. Identity can usefully be equated with a sense of self or self-concept. Personal development can therefore be conceptualized as the study of how

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[109] James N. Poling and Donald E. Miller, *Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 9.

> identity or sense of self or self-concept forms and develops. It is helpful to distinguish between the core of personality and the periphery of personality.[110]

Chinula's argument makes this particular theological theme consequential and will support the discussions in this chapter. This statement expresses the need for all generations, especially in an African American context as mine, to know that they are opposed and their identify formation may be one of the many causes for the struggles that they experience with other generations in the same local church. The pastor has a role in helping ministry partners to deal with their identity crisis so that it would not affect their ministry assignments.

Practical and Pastoral Theology

The theological foundations for this project will be focused mainly on practical theology and throws partial light on pastoral theology. Practical theology is more like an applied form of theology. It does not only concern itself with understanding theological doctrines but also focuses on how to apply these doctrines to real everyday life challenges. Practical theology seems to be more centered on active Christian experience than theological doctrine along which is mostly knowledge based. Implementing ministry assignments across the generations in the local church is a practical endeavor that takes training.

On the other hand, pastoral theology seems to be more reflective in nature. Donald K. Mckim posits that,

> Practical theology is the critical reflection on the church's life in both corporate and individual expressions. Often included are disciplines such as Christian

[110] Donald M. Chinula, *Building King's Beloved Community* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997), 13.

> education, homiletics, liturgics, and pastoral care. More broadly it relates to sanctification and living the Christ life. It has also been called practical divinity.[111]
>
> Pastoral theology is a branch of practical theology dealing with the relationships between the Word of God and the Christian lives of God's people.[112]

I fully support all aspects of the principles that pertain to both practical and pastoral theologies. I believe that practical theology is inseparable from pastoral theology. Pastoral theology is more like a by-product of practical theology. In mathematical terms, one can consider practical theology as the universal set of the church, and pastoral theology as a unit within the universal set. Richard R Osmer highlighted two outstanding issues relating to practical theology: Christian particularity and the common good, and the wound of reason. He acknowledges the following:

> Practical theology faces the challenges of grounding its identity and purpose in the mission of the church without sacrificing a commitment to scholarship and research that contributes, not only to the church, but also, to the common good. This challenge to practical theology takes different forms in different parts of the world. The second challenge of practical theology is what is called the 'wound of reason.' By this he was referring to the massive damage and change modern science and technology have unleashed upon the world. Both nature and human communities have been wounded and it is quite conceivable that the worst is yet to come.[113]

The two-fold objectives of practical theology mentioned above are mutually exclusive of each other. Practical theology intent is to formulate meaningful ways for the local church member to live out Christianity, and at the same time maintain high Christian scholarship. Practical theology can contextualize the need for holistic spiritual needs of any given people in any location. The church is composed of members. Modernity and technology

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[111] Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press), 215.

[112] McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 203.

[113] Richard R. Osmer, "Practical Theology: A Current International Perspective," *Hts Theological Studies* 67, no 2 (2011): 1-7.

have changed the way we do church. Theologically, the church is the body of Christ because it is composed of believers who are bound to Christ and to each other. It is the instrument or means through which Christ's work on earth is carried out. In the New Testament, the Greek term for church is *ecclesia*. The Greek term *ecclesis* refers to the assembly of citizens who have gathered for a town meeting.[114] The challenges faced by the community of faith are universal. However, each local church experiences its own challenges in various way. So, the challenge of my context is to promote unity among the multiple generations in the execution of their ministry assignment to avoid division and schism in the local church even though we exist and operate in a corrupt world.

Scriptural Support of Practical Theology

The Bible has a good number of passages that support the conceptual theme surrounding practical theology. These scriptural verses admonish the local church and society to practicalize what is stated and learned about God's created universe. Some of these biblical passages are as follows:

> 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, NRSV
> [17] So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new![18] All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;[19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.[20] So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.[21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
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> James 1: 22-25, NIV
> [22]Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.[23] Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who

[114] Rodney J. Hunter, ed., *The Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 867-872.

> looks at his face in a mirror[24] and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.[25] But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it –not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do.
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> James 2:14-17, NLT
> [14]What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?[15] Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing,[16] and you say, 'Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well' — but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? [17]So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.
>
> 1 John 3:18, NIV
> [18]Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

All the above scripture passages caution all followers of Christ, regardless of their ages, race, ethnicity, or generations; they are called to put their Christian faith into positive action within the context and other circumstance they find themselves. Practicing Christians are agents of holistic change. They must take into consideration that new life in Christ comes with responsibilities and blessings follow when we adhere to these instructions and practices. It is not optional but the responsibility of every local church member, despite their ages, to collectively implement their ministry assignments.

The Concept of Pastoral Theology

The concept of pastoral theology originates from the image of shepherding and could be referred to as a "theology of shepherding." Shepherding carries with it the connotation of leadership or serving as the leader of others. A pastoral practitioner is a person whom God has entrusted with the nurturing and care of God's people.[115] Based upon this premise, one can suggest that one of the objectives of pastoral theology is

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[115] Rodney J. Hunter, ed., *The Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 867-872.

healing. People get healed when pastoral care providers pay attention to their situation. In the words of Emmanuel Y. Lartey, "pastoral theology is reflective activity that brings together action and reflection in dialogically and mutually critical way."[116]

Pastoral theology is not done in isolation. We lead, preach, teach, equip nurture, guide, encourage and direct people. It is a process, not an event that involves God, the community, and the pastoral practitioner.[117] The pastoral theologian must be a detail-oriented person who is concerned about the community as a whole as well as the individuals who reside within the community.

Barbara J. McClure, in her peer-reviewed article published in the *International Journal of Practical Theology*, entitled "Pastoral Theology as the Art of Paying Attention: Widening the Horizons," stated that "Pastoral theology's attention to hurting people and its overriding concern for well-being is grounded in a theological vision of a loving God who wills that all participate in the divine life."[118] McClure assertion is reasonable that the pastoral theologian care he or she provides has a direct correlation to his or her theological vision of God. For example, the pastoral caregiver may view God as an immanent or a transcendent divine being. On the other hand, God may be viewed by the pastoral theologian as being both immanent and transcendent at the same time. Therefore, the pastoral practitioner performs services based upon his or her theological view or understanding of God.

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[116] Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), 14.

[117] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World,* 14.

[118] Barbara J. McClure, "Pastoral Theology as the Art of Paying Attention: Widening the Horizons," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 12, no. 2 (2008): 189.

McClure goes forward to argue that the word "attention" is not the central concept in pastoral theology; nevertheless, it is the word that captures the concern and nourishes the enthusiasm of the pastoral theologian. Equally important, as viewed in Emmanuel Y. Lartey's book, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World,* the word "context" is the central concept in pastoral theology.[119] The challenge of the local church has been how to tie in the central concept of pastoral theology "context" to what captures the concern of the pastoral theologian "attention." This may lead a practicing Christian to say that the pastoral theologians pay attention to details not in a vacuum but within a particular context. When attention is paid in a context, appropriate care is dispensed.

To a large extent, many people take the words methods and methodology to be similar. However, in pastoral theology, methods and methodology are not the same. The methodology is the by-product of methods. According to Lartey, "a methodology outlines the rationale for a method."[120] The methods of theological and historical reflection of God are the various ways a pastoral theologian engages in theological and historical discussions about God with a care receiver.

Practical Theology as a Constructive Methodology

The central theme of practical theology is understanding and addressing the constructive methodology relating to generational experiences in the local church. The methodology for ministry assignments execution is mutual support. Practical theology is relevant to every member of the local church whether the member is aware or not. The

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[119] Lartey, Pastoral *Theology in an Intercultural World*, 42.

[120] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World,* 75.

local church should formulate some methodologies surrounding how church members engage in practical theology that is grounded in biblical truths. James Newton Poling was right when he states the following:

> Every Christian who seriously tries to practice her or his faith is doing practical theology. Being a Christian means trying to live one's life according to one's best understanding of what the Bible teaches about what God wants us to do and find appropriate ways to live this faith in the world. We try to match our everyday lives with what God want.[121]

Church members should see their Christian journey on earth as a process that gets better through constant practice and interaction with other believers. We practice servicing God with all our heart. We practice living out of Christian faith by doing things that pleases God and bring glory to God's name. We practice working in oneness with other generations in the church in the midst of diversity because we have to co-exist for the survival of the local church or establishment.

Poling suggests two levels of methodologies. The first deals with local congregation, and the second focal point is church leaders in local churches and governing body. In the view of Poling,

> Living faithful Christian lives is not a simple matter because we are faced with decision about confusing situations and we must cooperate with other people when we don't understand either ourselves or the others. It is not an easy matter to understand our own motives for what we do, to have valid insights into the motives of other, and to know what to do when we are faced with contradictory information and painful consequences. It has long been part of Christian wisdom that we need to be active members of local communities of faith so that can be in constant dialogue with others about what Christians are called to do in our confusing times.[122]

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[121] James Newton Poling, *Rethinking Faith: A Constructive Practical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: 1517 Media, 2011), 137.

[122] Poling, *Rethinking Faith,* 138.

Poling is on point that one of challenges that do not promote unity in the local church among the various generations are the confusing situations that they have to deal with. Each generation will have a different worldview in addressing the needs of the local church. However, all generations must realize that when they cooperate with each other, they are able to achieve and eliminate disunity. Dialogue is the key to promoting unity among the multiple generations of the local church.

The position of Poling that every Christian should map out his or her path makes sense; however, he stated that a follower of Christ cannot be an expert on every subject matter in the church or larger society.[123] This is where unity among the multiple generations of the local church plays a major role. In Poling's first methodology of practical theology, he emphasizes that,

> When we are active members of a local congregation, we engage in regular worship and hear interpretations of the Bible and its relevance for our time. Preaching and worship include constant references to the Bible and its understanding of God and human life. Over a lifetime of worship and hearing about the Bible, believers continually recommit themselves to conforming their lives to their understanding of the Bible. In this sense, we are all engaged in doing practical theology: trying to discern the attitudes, decisions, and practices that are consistent with what God wants. We are trying to practice the theology in which we believe.[124]

This methodology of practical theology is congregational centered. The generations within the congregation need to be taught biblical truths in such a way for them to understand. This is because members of the local church have an important role to play if this approach is to come to fruition. Local church members' attitudes need to be adjusted if unity is to prevail in the community of faith.

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[123] Poling, *Rethinking Faith,* 138.

[124] Poling, *Rethinking Faith*, 138.

In Poling's second methodology of practical theology, he places emphasis on,

> Congregational leaders having a larger responsibility to help believers and congregations interpret the meaning of the Bible for everyday practices. This means that church leaders have to learn a method of doing practical theology that can guide the processes of theological reflection for struggling believers in their congregations. At this level, there are four essential steps to an adequate practical theological method for the local congregation: (1) reflection on practices of Christian communities; (2) reflection on the social and cultural context of practices; (3) reflection on the biblical and theological roots of practices; and (4) planning and implementing new, transforming practices for particular communities of faith.[125]

This statement informs the readers that the pastors, priest, rabbi, or spiritual leader of the local community of faith has a duty to help all the generations within the local church in empowering them to contextualize scripture to their everyday lives. Pastors, priests, or spiritual leaders should help local church member comprehend that the practice of Christianity is an ongoing process and not an event.

William V. Arnold argues persuasively in his book, *Introduction to Pastoral Care*, that

> Pastoral care involves a belief that an understanding of who we are is an essential. We must seek to understand ourselves in our strengths and weaknesses, as well as in our relationship with each other and with God, if we are to live out our vocation effectively. Bringing about such understanding and living are the aim of pastoral care. That aim manifests itself in at least three major functions: representation, servant, and carrier of tradition.[126]

The above assertion of Arnold is important. This is because, if the various generations of the local church know who they are as individual and collectively when it comes to the life and ministry of the church, more will be accomplish in the local church. Each generation have their strengths and weaknesses. Each generation is an integral part of the

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[125] Poling, *Rethinking Faith,* 142.

[126] William V. Arnold, *Introduction to Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1982), 87.

whole. Equally important, the pastor is the nucleus within the community of faith. He or she is the representative of generations in the local church. He or she should faithfully serve all generations in the local. He or she should maintain the traditions that are good and lead in getting rid of the traditions that adversely affect the local church.

The approach of Dale P. Andrews toward practical theology is intriguing because he approaches practical theology from the perspective of the Black church. He tries to explain how practical theology can be used to bridge that gap between Black theology and African American folk religion surrounding concerns for liberation. He seems to be on point in his analysis that,

> Practical theology holds in deliberation theological revelation, theoretical science, and the practice of ministry. Therein exists a critical relationship between theology, theory, and practice. Practical theology is not simply a science of diagnosis and application within a selective discipline, like some areas of medicine. Rather, practical theology is an engaging process between theology, theory, and practice. The term 'praxis' attempts to capture this reflexive quality of practical theology for effective ministry within the mission of the Church.[127]

This informs the reader that in Andrew's view practical theology has three layers. These levels complement each other because practical theology is a systematic process. Identification of the right theological approach to address any given situation is not sufficient; that approach must be put into practice to determine whether it is meaningful.

Why is there a need to discuss praxis in connection to promoting unity among the multiple generations in the local church? This is because within the local church praxis plays a central role in how the members and local church should operate. Gerben Heitink, in his scholarly article *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology,* notes,

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[127] Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 1.

> [T]he church is always involved in two types of praxis. One is the task of passing the faith to new generations, and the other is the task of communicating the faith within the context in which it is located. These two types of praxis are interrelated in Heitink's practical theological theory of action to three different arenas for ministry: the individual, the community of the church, and the broader society. It is at this point that the author establishes the linkage with the diverse disciplines that have emerged as the practices of theological education. These include pastoral care, Christian education, and spiritual formation, which focus on the individual; church as community; and service, evangelism, and lay vocation, which focus on society.[128]

This is a very true statement in relation to the local church. One generation must pass the torch to another. Effective and timely communication among the various generations in the local church is also essential to the process. The local church ministry is threefold: the individual member, the entire congregation, and larger community wherein the local church exists. The pastor must lead by example from in and out of the pulpit. The pastor's conversations should be about promoting unity among all the generations in the local church. The pastor must teach on the important of unity. The pastor must organize spiritual retreats that will bring together all generations in the local church in order for them to listen to each other stories and allow all voices in the local church to exist.

Scheiermacher's Practical Theological Understanding

Wilhelm Grab referred to Friedrich Daniel Ernst Scheiermacher (1768-1834) as the founding father of what we know today as practical theology. In other academic quarters, some scholars referred to him as "the father of modern theology." Scheiermacher envisioned and formulate the necessary mechanisms to make practical

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[128] Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, trans Reinder Bruinsma (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 358, in *Theology Today* 58, no 4 (January 2002): 618.

theology as one of the many subjects of theological engagements considering applied science. In short, he saw practical theology as a discipline that could stand on its own[129] In explaining Scheiermacher's theological understanding, Wilhelm Grab states that,

> In his construction of theology, Scheiermacher conceived the entirety of theology as a practical science. Within that larger context, practical theology involves reflection particularly on rules of Church leadership but is based upon a larger theory of Christianity within modern society and is developed in cooperation with all other theological disciplines.[130]

This understanding of practical theology as put forward by Scheiermacher is what the local church really needs today. The local church should not only operate spiritually, but also scientifically. The local church should go all out utilizing modern scientific discoveries to help advance its mission and purpose. In addition to spiritual methods that will be put in place to promote unity among the multiple generations in the local church, scientific techniques must also be utilized to encourage the generations in the local church to work together.

Scheiermacher, in his *Brief Outline of Theology as a Field of Study,* formulates a theological framework that place practical theology into a cohesive whole as a theology and as a science. This was the beginning of a new theological discipline.[131] Therefore, Wilhelm Grab seems to suggest that Scheiermacher's understanding of practical theology is strict forward. Grad stated that,

> In Schleiermacher's view, theology lives from its subject matter. Its content is given in the praxis of human life. This content is the religion of Christianity, which includes the entire history of Christianity and its continuation to the present day in Christian communities, the church, and last but not least, church leadership. By this very content, theology as a whole is committed to the practical

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[129] Wilhelm Grab, "Practical Theology as Theology of Religion: Schleiermacher's Understanding of Practical Theology as a Discipline," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 9, no. 2 (2005): 181.

[130] Grab, "Practical Theology as Theology of Religion," 181.

[131] Grab, "Practical Theology as Theology of Religion," 181.

> challenges of 'leadership in the Christian church' and practical theology especially has to deal with rules of church leadership. This understanding of theology – that theology in its entirety is a positive praxis-oriented science – does not presuppose a special definition of scientific studies that applies to theology and not other disciplines.[132]

This statement seems to suggest that theology covers all of an individual life. When theological concepts are translated into actionable accepted practices or customs of the church, then it is the praxis of humanity. The practical challenges facing the various generations of the local church can be addressed when they all work in concert. Therefore, Paul teaches the following:

> [12]Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.[13] For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body — whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.[14] Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.[15] Now if the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.[16] And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.[17] If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?[18] But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.[19] If they were all one part, where would the body be?[20] As it is, there are many parts, but one body (1 Cor 12:12-20; NIV)

Paul explains that for the local church to progress, all generations within the local church must coordinate their effort in unity. This was an issue that Saint Cyprian struggled with as bishop of the Carthaginian Church. St. Cyprian had to use Pauline imageries to explain the unity of the church.

Conclusion

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[132] Grab, "Practical Theology as Theology of Religion," 182.

In conclusion, I am of the certainty that this theological foundation chapter is an enormous support in expressing the need for promoting unity among the multiple generations in the local church. Practical theology of application is a theology of action. Pastoral theology of reflection is a theology of healing. Both theologies help to empower all generations in the local church. They meet church members where they are and focus on how to bring the best out of them. Unfortunately, the various generations in the local church are still struggling on how to put their acts together and work as a team. Charles V. Gerkin points out that the practical or pastoral theologian must go beyond the physical needs of people to also addressing the spiritual warfare of the community. This is because he or she finds himself or herself playing different roles at various times.[133]

One of the most frequent things that lead to disunity in the local church is the lack of communication. Rick Warren states:

> It is vital that clear lines of communication are established within your church. People tend to be down on what they aren't up on. Informed members are effective members, whereas uninformed members, regardless of talent, can't do much. Build redundancy into your communication system by developing several channels for disseminating congregational information.[134]

This statement is of significance because much of the disunity that exist among the generations in the church can be avoided with proper communication. When the pastor, who is the under shepherd in the local church, proactively disseminate congregational information, role conflict will not be an issue in the local church. Preaching and teaching the Word of God surrounding unity and oneness in the local church is a form of

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[133] Charles V. Gerkin, *Widening the Horizons: Pastoral Responses to a Fragmented Society*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1986), 124.

[134] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 327.

communication. Communicating social physiological, organizational leadership, and economic empowerment concepts to the congregation is a form of communication.

The conflicts that exist between the generations in the local church hamper the task of the practical or pastoral theologian. I think that the practical or pastoral practitioner should be the champion of reconciliation. Reconciliation prevents conflicts. Spiritual, socioeconomic, and political divisions are what necessitate reconciliation. Thus, in the view of practical theologian, reconciliation is an integral part of building peace in reducing the effects of conflict and disunity through the repair and transformation of damaged relationships. In this view, one can agree that the relational dimension of peacebuilding should center on reconciliation, forgiveness, trust-building, and future imagining.

Dialogue is one of the indispensable tools that must be utilized to foster unity in the local church. Without candid dialogue, church unity cannot exist. Those assigned to various ministries in the local church must begin an intentional conversation surrounding ministry cooperation among themselves. In practical theology, understanding, dialogue is more than the reciprocal trading of gifts. Everyone within the local church stands to benefit from the conversations.

Practical theology of application is also important to this foundation chapter because it lets the reader know that there are practical theological tools available to promote unity among the multiple generations in the local church. Alister E. McGrath underscores that “at its heart, practical theology is thus critical reflection upon the actions of the church in the light of the gospel and the Christian tradition. Theology provides a

way of evaluating situations and offers resource to deal with them."[135] If the various generations that make up the local church desire mutually to implement their ministry assignments, applying the following tasks is necessary; that is, descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative, and pragmatic application are necessary. I believe that the informed members of the local church, regardless of their generation, will work together efficiently because they have been taught to apply the concept that together each one achieves more.

[135] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 6th ed (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2017), 93.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

In this interdisciplinary foundation chapter, I addressed several approaches on how the different generations of the local church can work collectively in implementing their ministry assignments. Generational unity is vital for the local church to have a lasting impact on its members and the larger communities it serves. This chapter utilized the academic discipline of social psychology to support this doctoral project. The focus of the work was attitudinal change. However, attitudinal changes have some connections to behavioral and personality changes. Therefore, I analyzed the concepts of behavior and personality which are important subject matters in this discussion.

According to John D. DeLamater, Daniel J Myers, and Jessica L Collett, social psychology is "the systematic study of the nature and causes of human social behavior."[136] Equally important, Roy F. Baumeister and Kathleen D. Vohs, editors of *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology,* define social psychology as "the study of how normal people think, feel, and act. In that sense, social psychology is at the core of all fields that study the human experience."[137] Both definitions are important because the field of social

[136] John D. DeLamater, Daniel J Myers, and Jessica L Collett, *Social Psychology*, 8th ed. (New York, NY: Westview Press, 2015), 3.

[137] Roy F. Baumeister and Kathleen D. Vohs, eds., *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 9.

psychology encompasses sociology and psychology. Since the local church comprises people, sociology helps bring them together to avoid role conflicts and unnecessary generational struggles. On the other hand, the human beings that make up the local church have minds with diverse behaviors; this is where psychology comes in to deal with people's mindset and how people interpret their experiences in relationship to people. I used the field of social psychology for this undertaking because it will provide clarity and understanding of the very nature of why people do what they do in a group setting. One can argue that, most likely, there is always a reason behind a person or group's attitude. Unearthing the root causes behind people's attitudes is the most reasonable starting point to addressing problems. Considering that people constitute the generations in the local church, they will not see things in the same ways. Therefore, the crush of egos is inevitable.

This foundational chapter consists of an introduction that sets the premise for the entire paper. The research is divided into two sections. The first section gave a general overview and details encompassing attitude formation to behavior and personality. The second section deals with the theory that served as the foundation of the project. Additionally, there will be a conclusion that sums up the paper.

My hypothesis is if the various generations receive training about how to collectively implement ministry assignments, then they will have a greater understanding of the teamwork concept of the local church. The project used the social-psychological Interdependence Theory Model for this interdisciplinary foundation chapter. The adult members of the local church must be trained for them to understand and appreciate the

interdependence that must exist among them as they implement their ministry assignments.

The Interdependence Theory is one of the most conventional theories in the space of social and behavioral sciences. John Thibaut and Harold Kelley initially advanced this theory in 1959 in their book, *The Social Psychology of Groups*.[138] Thibaut and Kelley collaborated for over thirty-five years. Thibaut came across Kelley's theoretical writings, and his interest in social construct and standards paves the way for their partnership. This partnership led them to analyze people's interrelationships based on rewards and costs — individual and collective actions. This theory addresses classic themes such as dependence and power, rules, norms, and coordination and cooperation. [139]

Social psychologists are in consensus that,

> The main focus of interdependence theory is on social interaction, a comprehensive concept that captures the basics of human social life, which helps explain why interdependence theory has been used to understand so many themes for so long. After all, interaction is at the heart of where people live their social lives. Many feelings and emotions are rooted in social interactions, and many beliefs and thoughts are about past or future social interactions.[140]

It is clear that the goals of the Interdependence Theory are to explore individual attitudes, socialization, communication, interpersonal attraction and relationship, personality, and social structure. This work aims to use the social psychology theory of interdependence and its principles to improve generational relationships in the local church. In applying the interdependence theory, the primary focus will be on change in the generation's

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[138] Paul A. M. van Lange and Caryl E. Rusbult, "Interdependence Theory," in *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology, Vol. 2*, (London, UK: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2012), 251.

[139] Edward Jones, Harold Kelley, and John Schopler, “John Walter Thibaut (1917–1987),” *American Psychologist* 42, no. 9 (1987): 874-875.

[140] Lange and Rusbult, "Interdependence Theory," 251-72.

attitude that may likely lead to positive behavioral adjustments. The tenets of the interdependence theory align with what this project intends to accomplish. The project aims to reorientate people's attitudes, personality, and behavior in the local church toward unity.

> Icek Ajzen states, in the book, *Attitudes, Personality, and Behavior,* that:
>
> An attitude is a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event. Although formal definitions of attitude vary, most contemporary social psychologists agree that the characteristic attribute of attitude is its evaluative (pro-con, pleasant-unpleasant) nature.[141]

Often individuals within and without the local community of faith confuse a person's attitude with their behavior. On the surface, it seems like a person or group's attitude and behavior are obviously or circuitously interconnected. However, a person or group's attitude deals with how a person or group thinks or feels about others. These actions are psychological issues. To a large extent, attitude is somehow conceptual and intangible. In contrast, behavior centers around a person or group's response to a specific activity, other people, or the ecosystem. These occurrences are sociological matters. Consequently, a person or group's attitude impacts their thoughts, and behavior involves their activities. In a nutshell, a person or group's attitude most likely guides their behavior.[142]

Main Body

[141] Icek Ajzen, *Attitudes, Personality, and Behavior*, 2nd ed. (Maidenhead, Berkshire, UK: Open University Press, 2005), 3.

[142] Joseph P. Forgas, Joel Cooper, and William D Crano, *The Psychology of Attitudes and Attitude Change*, The Sydney Symposium of Social Psychology Series, Vol. 12 (New York, NY: Psychology Press, 2010), 10.

There are several elements to this compound-complex matter when dealing with the various generations in the local church. It does not matter the size of the local church; generational unity has always been and will continue to be a challenging undertaking. However, it is achievable if the local church works intentionally to attain this ambitious task. The local leadership should find a way to examine the mindset of members. The local church leadership – beginning with the pastor, priest, or spiritual leader – must promote unity among the generations by speaking about its benefits from the pulpit. This issue is important because many local churches grapple with getting the various ages to work together. People achieve more when they work together in every aspect of life and institutions; the local church is no exception. Having said this, an excellent place to begin the conversations is with attitude formation.

In this section, I will assess people's attitudes, behavior, and personality in general. It is essential to analyze and discuss these significant concepts of social psychology. Each one of these concepts helped support the framework of the project implementation.

Attitude

One of the primary interests of social psychologists over the years has been the study of attitudes. They may have other concerns from time to time, but attitudes continue to attract their interest the most. This examination is because a person or group's

attitude helps understand their feelings, thoughts, and actions.[143] Tobias Vogel and Michaela Wanke, in their book, *Attitudes and Attitude Change*, state that,

> Over the years, social psychologists have suggested different classes of psychological needs or goals which may be served by holding attitudes. Because almost any conceptualization of attitude functions has introduced a different taxonomy, and unfortunately often used the same terms for different concepts or different terms for the same concepts, students often find the whole matter rather confusing.[144]

Realizing the confusion surrounding the term "attitude," Kenneth S. Bordens and Irwin A. Horowitz, in trying to formulate a description of attitude, state in their book, *Social Psychology*,

> Gordon Allport, an early attitude theorist, formulated the following definition: 'An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related' (1935). This is a rich and comprehensive definition, and although there have been many redefinitions over the years, Allport's definition still captures much that is essential about attitudes.[145]

Gordon Allport's definition, as mentioned above, is going to be the working definition of attitude for this project. This definition is essential because it supports the hypothesis of this project that attitude begins in the minds of church members that belongs to the various generations in the local church. The mental shift toward oneness in the different local church generations will go a very long way in promoting unity.

Allport's description of attitude has three components. Firstly, attitude is inevitably private because it is mental. Attitude exists in mind. A social psychologist

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[143] Kenneth S. Bordens and Irwin A. Horowitz, *Social Psychology* (Mahwah, NJ: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), 158.

[144] Tobias Vogel and Micheala Wanke, *Attitudes and Attitude Change,* 2nd ed. (London, UK: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2016), 6.

[145] Bordens and Horowitz, *Social Psychology*, 158.

cannot measure attitudes directly. As a result, they measure it indirectly. Secondly, learning and experience have a direct correlation to mentality. People's attitudes are mostly formed based on what they know and how they feel in a particular situation. Lastly, people's attitudes are proportional to their actions or comportment. People's attitudes make them act in the manner they behave, whether negatively or positively, to the object of those attitudes.[146] John D. DeLamater and his colleagues, relying on Fazio and Towles-Schwen (1999), underlines that "attitudes become activated when something in the environment triggers them, like encountering the attitude object."[147] The triggers that activate the tensions of disunity among the multiple generations in the local church must be addressed before promoting unity.

Most social psychologists, including Allport, are in consensus that attitudes develop out of experiences. The process through which attitude develops is called attitude formation. Attitude formation involves moving from having no attitude about an object to having either a positive or negative attitude in relation to the same thing.[148]

A person or group's attitude could either be explicit or implicit. Often humans are aware of how their attitudes affect their behavior progressively or adversely. Human beings are knowledgeable of their straightforward attitudes because it operates on the level of consciousness. We are mindful of the cognitive native of them. Cognitive effort activates the control process. The explicit human attitudes have a direct effect on individuals' behavior. For instance, you may have feelings for a particular candidate

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[146] Bordens and Horowitz, *Social Psychology*, 158-159.

[147] DeLamater, Myers, and Collett, *Social Psychology,* 259.

[148] DeLamater, Myers, and Collett, *Social Psychology*, 167.

running for an elected post in the local church, and your vote for them matches your attitude to your behavior. On the other hand, the implicit attitude is created when a person or group operates unconsciously. Implicit operates without an individual or group awareness. This type of attitude is automatically counterproductive. It affects the behavior devoid of deliberate thinking and less than the level of consciousness. For instance, a member of one generation has a fast adverse response to a member of another generation even though they have no ill feeling toward them.[149]

Attitudes consist of four unified elements: cognitions, affective responses, behavioral intentions, and behaviors. The four elements that constitute the structure of attitudes are dynamic and support each other. Changes in one component of the attitude structure may affect all the other elements within the structure. However, the affective element overshadows the structure.[150] It is somehow burdensome to measure the functions of attitude. As a result, the function of attitude was overlooked by social psychological exploration until the 1980s. Many people's attitudes are multi-functional instead of serving just a single function. They serve separate functions for the same individual at various times.[151]

Vogel and Wanke persuasively argue that "attitudes are not directly observable, so if one wants to know a person's attitude, one must find some other way of assessing it. Probably the easiest way is to ask the person simply."[152] This argument by Vogel and Wanke makes a lot of sense. The simplest way for the local church to determine why the

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[149] DeLamater, Myers, and Collett, *Social Psychology*, 160-161.

[150] DeLamater, Myers, and Collett, *Social Psychology*, 159-160.

[151] Vogel and Wanke, *Attitudes and Attitude Change,* 10.

[152] Vogel and Wanke, *Attitudes and Attitude Change,* 19.

generations are not working together but instead compete with each other is to ask them. It supported the project's methodology by executing an interactive training workshop where a cross-section of the local church gathered and asked their questions.

Vogel and Wanke go forward to suggest that people may acquire their attitudes from different sources. One of these ways is that humans are born with some inherited personality that may show up in their behavior later in life. Another way people acquire their attitude is from external influences.[153] Within the context of this project, the latter suggestion is more pervasive than the former. The generations may have embraced their competitive attitude from external forces. Therefore, training surrounding unity in the local church may adjust the generation's attitudes constructively.

Additionally, Vogel and Wanke did excellent work dealing with the level of measurement that exists between attitude and behavior relation. They list the following correspondence assumption,

> One reason for a weak association between attitude and behavior may lie in the lack of correspondence (or compatibility) of the two measures. Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) noted that both attitudes and behaviors can be described with respect to four characteristics:
> (1) the action element: What behavior is being studied e.g., voting, donating, or attending?
> (2) the target element: What is the target of the behavior e.g., a political party, a charity, or a lecture?
> (3) the context element: In what context is the behavior being performed e.g., a totalitarian or democratic society, in public or in private, at university or evening school?
> (4) the time component: At what point in time is the behavior occurring e.g., immediately or over the following year?[154]

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[153] Vogel and Wanke, *Attitudes and Attitude Change,* 76.

[154] Vogel and Wanke, *Attitudes and Attitude Change,* 23.

The action element for this project is studying the inconsistent behavior of the generations. It involves the target element volunteer nature of the generations. The context element is the local church. Lastly, the time component is to establish when the members in each generation feel like they must stand up to other generations in the local church. At this juncture, this is an appropriate moment to move into discussion behavior.

Behavior

Unlike attitude, the behavior of a person, group, or institution is an observable phenomenon. Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen make the following assertion in their book, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach,*

> The behaviors people perform in their daily lives can have profound effects on their health and well-being, on the health and well-being of other individuals, groups, and organizations to which they belong, and on society at large. There is a growing awareness that human behavior can both cause and alleviate social problems in a variety of domains such as health, safety, the environment, racism and intergroup relations, work motivation, and productivity.[155]

The above claim seems to be true. The behavior displayed by the generations in the local church has an undesirable or favorable effect on the individual within the generation, the generation as a unit, or the local community of faith in general. To a large extent, if the leader or leaders, particularly the pastor of the context for this project, promotes unity among the multiple generations in the local church, this objective may be possible.

People behave in the way that they know. Vivien Burr seems to agree with this claim because, in her book *The Person in Social Psychology,* states that "people's behavior is very context-dependent."[156] Developing a health context that promotes unity

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[155] Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach* (New York, NY: Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 1.

[156] Vivien Burr, *The Person in Social Psychology* (New York, NY: Psychology Press, 2002), 26.

among the multiple generations in the local church through training will produce meaningful gestures for the vitality of the local church.

Personality

Ralph H. Turner points out in his work, "Personality in Society: Social Psychology's Contribution to Sociology," that one should,

> [A]ssume a relative rather than an absolute distinction between behavior and personality. Personality refers to lasting rather than momentary effects of experience — a storage of effects for expression in later behavior.[157]

The position of Turner seems to support the general views among social psychologists that there is some sort of relationship between behavior and personality.

Arie W. Kruglanski and E. Tory Higgins assert in *Theory Construction in Social Personality Psychology: Personal Experiences and Lessons Learned* that, "the subject matter of personality and social psychological theories, which ranges from classic questions about human nature to everyday life experiences and behaviors (Allport, 1968), is inherently fascinating to most people.[158] Social psychologists are still researching to fully figure out the number of ways that the behavior of an individual or group affects the personality of a person or the group collectively, or vice versa.

There are many theories of personality; the major ones are trait (dispositional) methodology, behaviorist, evolutionary, humanistic, biological, social learning, and

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[157] Ralph H. Turner, "Personality in Society: Social Psychology's Contribution to Sociology," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1988): 1-10.

[158] John T. Cacioppo, "Theory Construction in Social Personality Psychology: Personal Experiences and Lessons Learned," in *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 8, no. 2, eds. Arie W. Kruglanski and E. Tory Higgins (New York, NY: Psychology Press, 2016), 42.

psychodynamic approach. The trait (dispositional) procedure will be used in this work. Ajzen suggests that the trait (dispositional) method believes that,

> The individuals can be described in terms of a perhaps large, but finite, number of personality characteristics. These personality characteristics are expected to find expression in behavior.
>
> Factor 1: Extraversion – Introversion
> Talkative – Silent, Frank – Secretive Adventurous – Cautious, Sociable – Reclusive
> Factor 2: Agreeableness
> Good-natured – Irritable, Gentle – Headstrong Cooperative – Negativistic, Not Jealous – Jealous
> Factor 3: Conscientiousness
> Tidy – Careless, Responsible – Undependable Scrupulous – Unscrupulous, Persevering – Quitting
> Factor 4: Emotional Stability
> Calm – Anxious, Composed – Excitable Poised – Nervous, Not Hypochondriacal – Hypochondriacal
> Factor 5: Culture
> Artistically sensitive – Insensitive, Imaginative – Simple Intellectual – Nonreflective, Refined – Crude.[159]

All these factors are seen in the personalities of the generations of the Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church. Understanding these factors will go a long way in shaping the project.

The second section of this paper will focus on the Interdependence Theory Model. This is the social psychological theory that the project will be constructed around. The Interdependence Theory Model deals with interpersonal levels of analysis. The consideration of the project is to ascertain how each of the generations in the local church needs to be analyzed in relation to others on the interpersonal level to determine how unity can be promoted among them.

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[159] Ajzen, *Attitudes, Personality, and Behavior*, 19.

Interdependence

Before going into a detailed discussion surrounding the Interdependence Theory Model, it will be expedient to formulate a general understanding of the word "interdependence." Ann C. Rumble, in her book, *Understanding Behavior in the Context of Time: Theory, Research, and Application*, state that,

> Interdependence can be defined as any situation in which two or more interacting individuals have some degree of control over the other's outcomes; the structure of the situation encourages awareness of this control; and the nature of the relationship affects how this control is expressed (Kelley et al., 2003; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).[160]

This description is the working definition of interdependence. Each of the generations in the local church is composed of people that interact with each other. Every one of them wants the local church to go in a particular direction. Their attempt to move the local church in a direction that they think is right is a form of control.

Interdependence Theory

The following table will give a concise historic general synopsis of the interdependence theory. This theory has evolved over the years. However, the central emphasis has not changed.

Brief Historical Overview of Interdependence Theory

The book *The Social Psychology of Groups* written by J. W. Thibaut and H. H. Kelley, provides a blueprint for the Interdependence Theory.

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[160] Alan Strathman and Jeff Joireman, eds, "Ann C. Rumble, *"Understanding Behavior in the Context of Time: Theory, Research, and Application* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), 207.

> Provides social exchange analysis of interactions and relationships [of] individuals in dyads and small groups.
>
> Uses games as a conceptual tool and focuses on analysis of dependence, power, rewards, costs, needs, and outcomes in exchange relations.
>
> Introduces new concepts such as comparison level and comparison level of alternatives (CL and CL-alt) to understand relationship satisfaction and stability. Kelley and Thibaut's study, "Interpersonal Relations: A Theory of

Interdependence," provide yet another framework for understanding the Interdependence Theory.

> Provides comprehensive analysis of interaction situations in terms of four dimensions, labeled as degree of dependence, mutuality of dependence, correspondence of outcomes, and basis of dependence.
>
> Introduces transformation from given to effective matrix, thereby formalizing broader interaction goals than immediate self-interest.
>
> Adopts a functional analysis of transformations, thereby recognizing social learning of transformation rules, and its functional value for particular domains of situation.
>
> Kelley and his associates put forth yet another work, *An Atlas of Interpersonal*

Situation, that speaks to this same subject.

> Provides an overview of 21 basic interaction situations, which are analyzed in terms of interdependence features, the psychological processes that they afford, and the interaction processes that they might evoke.
>
> Extends the taxonomy of situations by two additional dimensions to yield six dimensions, including (a) degree of dependence, (b) mutuality of dependence, (c) basis of dependence, (d) covariation of interest (was formerly referred to as correspondence of outcomes), (e) temporal structure, and (f) information availability.
>
> At present and in the future: Integrates interdependence theory with principles of evolutionary theory to understand adaptation as a function of the situational structure. Extends interdependence theory to neuroscientific models of the social mind. Re-extends interdependence theory to group processes and relationships between groups.[161]

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[161] Lange and Rusbult, "Interdependence Theory," 260.

Rumble does an excellent job of discussing the interdependence theory. She points out that,

> Interdependence theory is an extension of Lewin's (1946) basic assertion that behavior is a function of the person and the situation [in Lewin's terms, B = f (S, P)] (Holmes, 2002; Kelley et al., 2003; Lewin, 1946; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). Interdependence theorists assert that social interactions are a function of each individual and the particular situation in which they are interacting [I = f (Situation, Person A, Person B)], and these situations may include features that encourage cooperative or competitive behavior (Kelley et al., 2003; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).[162]

For this project, attention was given to each generation instead of individuals and the specific situation as they interact with other generations in the local church. The word "situation" is essential to this concept. Harold H. Kelley, who is primarily responsible for the chapter "Outcome Independence" in the book, *An Atlas of Interpersonal Situations,* states that "a 'situation' is defined in the dictionary as 'a position for conditions and circumstances,' or, more generally, as a 'site' or 'problem.'"[163]

The power of the situation plays a pivotal role in interpersonal interactions. This position may be the reason Caryl E. Rusbult and Paul A. M. van Lange argue persuasively in their scholarly journal article, "Interdependence, interaction, and relationships," that,

> The essence of social psychological way of thinking frequently is described in terms of the 'power of the situation.' Indeed, the familiar equations B=f (P, E) embodies our shared desire to understand the ways in which behavior (B) is shaped not only by properties of the person (P), but also by features of the situations, or social environment (E) (Lewin 1936). Perhaps the essence of a social psychological analysis can be even more fully expressed by construing our goals in terms of the relationship between people. To develop a truly social

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[162] Strathman and Joireman, "Ann C. Rumble," 208.

[163] Harold H. Kelley, John G Holmes, Norbert L. Kerr, Harry T. Reis, Caryl E. Rusbult, and Paul A. M. van Lange, *An Atlas of Interpersonal Situations* (Cambridge, UK: New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 17.

> psychology, we may need to expand our formulation, noting that an interaction (I) between persons A and B can be conceptualized in terms of their needs, thoughts, and motives in relation to one another (A and B) in the context of the specific social situation (s) in which their interaction transpires (Holmes 2002, Kelley et al, 2002). Expressed in an equation, I=f (S, A, B).[164]

The power of the situation is evident in the tension among the generations in the context of this project. This project aims to devise workable methodologies for promoting unity among the multiple generations in the local church by cooperative as an alternative to the competition.

The interdependence theory initially articulated by John Thibaut and Harold Kelley in 1951 remains one of the most significant social and behavioral sciences theories. Kelley and Thibaut later extended it in 1978 into a complete theory of social interaction. The four fundamental premises are as follows, (i) the principle of structure (the situation) with six dimensions; (ii) the principle of transformation, which is what people make of the situation; (iii) the principle of interaction which determines by people interaction; and (iv) the principle of adaptation which is focused on social interaction experiences in relationship to adopt transformations in similar situations. Each of these assumptions deals with power, dependence, cooperation, conflict, trust, and distrust.[165]

The social-psychological interdependence theory is the most appropriate model since this project attempts to understand social interactions and provide a framework for promoting unity among the many generations in the local church. Most likely interpersonal interactions are modeled with the environment in mind. In this instance, the

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[164] Caryl E. Rusbult and Paul A. M. van Lange, "Interdependence, interaction, and relationships," *Annual Review of Psychology* 54 (2003): 352.

[165] Paul A. M. van Lange and Daniel Balliet, "Interdependence Theory," in *APA handbook of personality and social psychology, Volume 3: Interpersonal relations*, ed. Mario Mikulincer et al, 65-92, 668. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2015), 65.

local church becomes the environment where the interpersonal interactions are taking place. The attitudes of individuals and the generations have an impact on the local church. The motives and cognitive processes of each generation have a direct effect on their interactions. The impact of time on situations or the relationship is the primary outcome of the interdependence analysis models considering a series of interactions.[166]

The interdependence structure may either be matrices or transition lists. Social situations are often described using the matrix approach. In this approach, parties to the situation or situations may affect their own or others' well-being. On the other hand, the transition list forces on the chronological and material properties of interdependence. It does not only speak to the behavioral preferences but also the outcomes. People's needs are met through matrices or the transition lists.[167] The interdependence structure exists among the generations in the local church, but individuals do not seem to understand that these structures are in place.

At this juncture, the four basic assumptions of the interdependence theory are going to be discussed beginning with the principle of structure concept. These assumptions are essential when it comes to the implementation of the project. The principle of structure, which is also called the structure, has six dimensions. Lange and Rusbult, in discussing the Interdependence Theory in the *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, underscore that the principle of structure assumptions helps researchers to understand the interdependence characteristics of a situation to make sense of the psychological, social interaction, behavior, and process to include motives, cognition, and

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[166] Strathman and Joireman, "Ann C. Rumble," 208-209.

[167] Rusbult and Lange, "Interdependence, interaction, and relationships," 353-354.

affect. The elements of the situations within the structure are characterized based on the availability of information, the foundation of dependency, the intensity of reliance, mutuality of dependence, the reason why people act the way do they at times, and earthly construct.[168]

The table below depicts the six dimensions that are within the principle of the structure assumptions. This table helps to outline the situational measurement and the motivations that come with it.

The six dimensions of the situational structure and their affordances (after Holmes, 2002; and Kelley et al., 2003)

1 Level of dependence:	Comfort versus discomfort with dependence; comfort versus discomfort with independence
2 Mutuality of dependence	Comfort versus discomfort with vulnerability (as dependent) Comfort versus discomfort with responsibility (as power holder)
3 Basis of dependence	Dominance (leading) versus submissiveness (following) Assertiveness versus passivity
4 Covariation of interests	Prosocial versus self-interested motives (rules for self) Trust versus distrust of partner motives (expectations about others)
5 Temporal structure	Dependability versus unreliability Loyalty versus disloyalty
6 Information availability	Openness versus need for certainty Optimism versus pessimism[169]

[168] Lange and Rusbult, “Interdependence Theory,” 254.

[169] Lange and Rusbult, "Interdependence Theory," 254

The following basic assumption is the principle of transformation. This supposition goal is to determine what people make of the situation they find themselves confronted with. It involves rewards and cost that includes emotional, social, instrumental, and opportunity. The outcomes of transformation are cooperation, equality, altruism, and aggression. Individualists consider the effects of an individual or another person's behavior in terms of outcomes that are subject to transformation. The principle of transformation is a mental undertaking that interaction objectives manage with support from affective, cognitive, and motivational processes.[170]

The third assumption is the principle of interaction. This assumption can be expressed in the mathematical equation as SABI: I = f (A, B, S). It deals with the outcomes that include the level of the comparison level and the comparison level of alternatives. In this concept, interaction is the function of two individuals (A and B) who are the objective actors of the situation. Individual A and B motives, cognitive and affective experiences may be activated by the situation, which may lead to a particular mutual response in light of the particular behavior pattern of interaction.[171]

The final basic assumption is the principle of adaptation. The essential argument of this assumption is that repeated social interaction leads to adaptation. Van Lange and Rusbult suggest that,

> These adaptations are probabilistic and reflect (a) differences in orientation between people across partners and situations (dispositions), (b) orientations that people adopt to a specific interaction partner (relationship-specific orientations),

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[170] Lange and Rusbult, "Interdependence Theory," 254.

[171] Lange and Rusbult, "Interdependence Theory," 254.

> and (c) rule-based inclinations that are shared by many people within a culture to respond to a particular classes of situation in a specific manner (social norms).[172]

The Philosophical Structure of Interdependence

Essentially, two hypotheses support the interdependence theory. The first hypothesis has the interpersonal foundation at its foundation. Bertram Gawronski and Galen V Bodenhausen point out that,

> This emphasis, which derives from Lewin's (1943) account of the E term in his famous formulation, B = f (P, E) – namely, that behavior is a function of the person and the environment – is consistent with widespread recognition of the centrality of social relations to human activity and wellbeing. It also converges with contemporary interest in the adaptive significance of interpersonal activity and connections in human evolution.[173]

On the other hand, the second hypothesis surrounds the analysis of social interactions in relationship with interdependence with people. Bertram Gawronski and Galen V. Bodenhausen also argue that,

> This assumption follows from the functional analysis inherent in Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) original work: that groups exist to help people solve problems more effectively than they could do alone. In other words, because 'socially significant behavior will not be repeated unless it is reinforced, rewarded in some way' (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, p. 5), analysis of the manner in which groups go about solving problems taking into account the facts of their interdependence represent a useful way to comprehend social behavior. This is accomplished by examining the abstract properties of outcome interdependence in the various situations that groups (or, more typically, dyads) encounter.[174]

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[172] Lange and Rusbult, "Interdependence Theory," 254.

[173] Bertram Gawronski and Galen V. Bodenhausen, eds., *Theory and Explanation in Social Psychology* (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2014), 308.

[174] Gawronski and Bodenhausen, *Theory and Explanation in Social Psychology*, 308.

Conclusion

Following the analysis of attitude, behavior, personality, and the social-psychological interdependence theory, I am of the strongest conviction that this portion of the study supports the Doctor of Ministry project "The Development of A Ministry Model that Promotes Unity Among Multiple Generations in the Church." After studying this subject matter, I am reassured that the features of the interdependence theory are needed to help promote unity among the several generations in local communities of faith. It is concerning that the interdependence theory has not been utilized to its fullness in many local situations. In the same vein, it is disconcerting that the interdependence theory has not been used to help get the generations to work together.

John G. Holmes, in his discussion of the configuration of how interdependence, when practicalized, shapes social cognition in relationships, makes an insightful statement in the book, *Interdependence, Interaction, and Close Relationships.* He highlights that "relationships can be enriching. When love and support are mutual, feelings of intimacy and connectedness strengthen. Partners become tuned to each other's needs and facilitate each other's goals, magnifying the considerable benefits of interdependence."[175]

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[175] John G. Holmes, "The Structure of Interdependence Shapes Social Cognition in Relationships," in *Interdependence, Interaction, and Close Relationships*, eds. Laura V. Machia, Christopher Rolfe Agnew, and Ximena B Arriaga (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 37.

The coexistence of the generations is a tasking venture because people from various persuasions with different ideologies make up these generations. However, there are rewards and costs associated with generations working together and supporting each other. The rewards that the generations stand to achieve from cooperation outweigh the cost of tensions.

David W. Johnson, in the peer-reviewed articles "Social Interdependence: Interrelationships among Theory, Research, and Practice," explains the critical aspects of cooperation. He asserts,

> Applications of social interdependence theory are required to operationalize either positive or negative interdependence in order to create promotive or oppositional interaction that will lead to the desired outcomes. Operationalizations of positive interdependence have focused both on the relative efficacy of the ways in which it may be structured and on increasing the forces for responsibility through individual accountability procedures. Operationalizations of promotive interaction have included an emphasis on social skills and group processing. Although the basic theoretical premise focuses on three variables (interdependence, interaction, and outcomes), the operationalizations of positive interdependence and promotive interaction have resulted in the emphasis of five variables (interdependence, individual accountability, interaction pattern, social skills, and group processing).[176]

Positive cooperation among the generations in the local church is the ultimate aim of this activity. Most of those who form a part of the older generations in the local church make up the institution's financial lifeline. Equally important, the younger generations bring vitality to life and the mission of the community of faith. Therefore, all generations must work collectively in unity for the sustainability of the local church.

Interdependence among the generations in the local church makes them stronger. They become support systems for each other in the implementation of their ministry

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[176] David W. Johnson, "Social Interdependence: Interrelationships among Theory, Research, and Practice," *The American Psychologist* 58, no 11 (2003): 934-35.

assignments. Therefore, the most reasonable interdisciplinary methodology to promote unity among the generations in the local church is the social-psychological interdependence theory.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

My personal, religious, and contextual experiences over the years serve as the basis for the project "The Development of A Training Model that Promotes Unity Among Multiple Generations in the Local Church." In my personal and ministerial journeys, I have always bridged the gap in my family and ministry assignments. Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, Winnsboro, South Carolina, is the context of my ministry. Mount Zion AME Church has a cross-section of members from various generations. My context has experienced its fair share of infighting among the generations. The multiple boards and organizations at Mount Zion are the ministries. These ministries have different assignments; however, they are not collectively implementing their ministry assignments. The concept of teamwork is missing from their interactions. They lack an understanding of the teamwork model of the local church.

People do not always agree with each other. Some form of division or disagreement is a part of life. I agree with Daniel L. Buttry that the Holy Bible, which accounts for human existence, is jam-packed with quarrels. The conflict starts in the Garden of Eden concerning who was responsible for disobeying God as it relates to

eating the forbidden fruit[177]. The church should not be concerned with who starts the misunderstanding among the generations. Its focus must be on how all the generations can work together. This local church needs a training model to promote unity among the multiple generations that make up its membership.

This project focused on five essential pillars. These pillars included an analysis of the generations in the local church in terms of their characteristics, the biblical imperative for unity, the practical methodologies that promote unity in the local church, the benefits that the church reaps when the generations support each other, understanding the relationship between sociology and psychology, and the interdependence theory to unity.

Everyone in the local church falls within a particular generation based on their date of birth. As a result of this verifiable evidence, each generation of the local church has some specific characteristics that need to be understood to inform the other pillars of the project. The generations that make up Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church fall within the following generations that Dr. Sadler highlighted in his book: the Builder; the Boomer (Baby Boomer); the Buster, known as Generation X; the Millennials; Generation Z, and Generation Alpha.[178] The generational focus of this project will cover the Builder Generation to Generation Z above eighteen years old. Therefore, the characteristics of the Builder Generation to Generation Z were analyzed in depth.

The biblical foundation portion of this project illustrated the second pillar. The participants gain insight into the metaphorical understanding of the church as the body of

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[177] Daniel L. Buttry, *Christian Peacemaking: From Heritage to Hope* (King of Prussia, PA: Judson Press, 1994), 28-29.

[178] Sadler, *Pot Changers*, 78-82.

Christ through an exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. This symbolic image captured the attention of the participants. Paul was very creative in painting this picture of a church plagued by disunity. Therefore, Paul used the human body to communicate the significance of unity in the church.

The third pillar dealt with practical methodologies that promote unity in the local church. The historical foundation section achieved this pillar. Saint Cyprian's personality sums up fostering unity in the church. He was able to complete somehow his mission of unifying the church. He focused most of his attention on issues that unified and did not divide the church. He may have realized that the church would be in crisis without unity. Therefore, he promoted reconciliation and forgiveness among church members as a practical leader. The historical figure Saint Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, did an exceptional job unifying the Carthaginian Church.

The fourth pillar concentrated on the benefits that the church stands to reap when the generations support each other through an innovative theological paradigm. Practical and Pastoral Theology served as the project's theological foundation. Practical theology of application is a theology of action. Pastoral theology of reflection is a theology of healing. Both theologies help to guide and empower all generations in the local church. Practical application theology is also vital to this project because it lets the participants know that useful theological tools are available to promote unity among the multiple generations of the church.

Richard R. Osmer explains practical theology around the core tasks of functional theological interpretations: "What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be

going on? How might we respond?"[179] In the attempt to formulate a way to promote unity, participants gave extreme attention to answering Osmar's core practical theological task questions.

The fifth pillar emphasized understanding the relationship between sociology and psychology and the interdependence theory concerning unity. The field of social psychology encompasses both sociology and psychology. We used the field of social psychology during the interactive training workshop because it provided clarity considering understanding the very nature of why people do what they do in a group setting. There is always a reason behind a person or group's attitude. Unearthing the root causes behind people's attitudes is the most reasonable starting point for addressing problems.

The interdisciplinary foundation segment centers upon a classical social psychological concept called the Interdependence Theory. The Interdependence Theory enhanced the participants understanding of the generations by pointing out biblical examples, interactive workshops, and practical pastoral leadership. Equally important, concepts of attitude formation that include behavior and personality were particularly critical in the execution of the project to create unity among the multiple generations of the local church.

Participants were trained in using the interdependence social psychological theory to practicalize the concept of generational dependence through practical demonstrations, real-life examples, and case studies that went a long way in attempting to address and offer solutions for the local church. The implementation of interdependence precepts

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[179] Osmer, *Practical Theology,* 4.

enables the local church generations to become support systems for each other through training.

The project's purpose was to bring awareness and start an intentional conversation among the various generations in Mount Zion AME Church about formulating a holistic generational local church ministry action plan to teach and equip the local church membership. This project developed strategies to promote unity in the local church. Accomplishing the mission and purpose of the local church is a complicated task.

Interactive Training Workshops Design

The presenter used the UX Workshop approach to conduct the interactions and engagements during the training workshop. The UX Workshop Approach is "intensive collaborative sessions used to solve problems and enable progress on a particular challenge throughout the design timeline. Workshops enable participants to come together for a concentrated time of idea generation and hands-on activities that allow them to achieve an actionable goal."[180] A UX Workshop has five classifications: Discovery, Empathy, Design, Prioritization, and Critique. The Discovery Workshop Method was the approach utilized for the project. During a Discovery Workshop, participants come together to understand the current situation and build consensus on addressing them. This type of workshop gathers knowledge and creates agreement among the participants.

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[180] Neilsen Norman Group, "5 UX Workshops and When to Use Them: A Cheat Sheet," https://www.nngroup.com/articles/5-ux-workshops/.

Methodology

The problem of this project is the inability of adult church members to work together in performing their ministry assignments. If adult members are unable to support each other ministry assignments, it is less likely for the local church to grow and develop. Therefore, if the various generations receive training about how to collectively implement ministry assignments, then they will have a greater understanding of the teamwork concept of the local church.

Research Design

The qualitative research design using the phenomenological form was employed to measure the project. Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, in their book *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th edition), state that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have construct; that is how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world."[181] The qualitative research method is nonnumerical. The data was assembled from the pre- and post-surveys, weekly journaling, and interviews. The qualitative research method was employed to acquire understanding instead of gathering numbers and predictive data.

The participants provided the data that was used to authenticate or refute my hypothesis. The church secretary recruited participants for the project from the advertisements published in the church's weekly bulletin and announcements. At the

[181] Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation,* 4th ed., The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 15.

introductory meeting, before the interactive training workshops commenced, the participants were requested to read, sign, and return the Informed Consent Forms (see Appendix B).

The participants received pre-and post-surveys (see Appendix C) to establish before and after training data. The participants' reflections in the weekly journal entries served as the source of additional data. The weekly journal entries highlighted learning from the training; it determined how the participants reflected on the lectures and discussions in the interactive training workshops. Participants were also interviewed individually at the end of the training.

Mount Zion AME Church was the site for the seven-week interactive training workshops located in Winnsboro, South Carolina, from August 27, 2022, to October 8, 2022. Each interactive training workshop session lasted for one hour and thirty minutes weekly. I served as the sole presenter. We met in person once a week on each Saturday. The interactive training goals were two-fold. First, it was to ascertain if unity was missing among the generations in the local church. Second, it was to explore possible plans of action to promote unity among the various ages in the local church. These workshops educated the participants on ways to support each other ministry assignments. I sat out to test the hypothesis with ten participants. However, two people dropped out a few days before the start of the interactive training workshops. As a result, the scientific guess was tested with a group size of eight participants.

A demographical survey was not necessary. I already had the demographical statistics needed by extracting the information from Mount Zion Membership Data Base. At the beginning of the first session, I administered the pre-project test (see Appendix C).

Likewise, I gave the post-project test (see Appendix C) at the closing of the last day session. I used open-ended questions for the survey to gather more data from the participants. The questions used are below:

Pre-and-Post Project Survey

Please take your time to complete this survey. Please answer the questions to the best of your understanding. Please indicate your responses right under each question.

1) What is unity?
2) Explain how important it is to know and feel that other ministry partners support you.
3) Are you satisfied with the level of cooperation you receive from your other ministry partners? If yes, why so? If not, why not?
4) What benefits does the local church stand to gain when all the generations work together?
5) What do you know about the interdependency of the generations that make up the church?
6) Based on your experience, do church members' attitudes, behavior, and personality affect how effectively your ministry assignment is implemented?
7) Do you think there is a need to promote unity among the generations in the local church? If yes, why so? If not, why not?

The participants received pre-and post-surveys to establish before and after training data. I used this data-gathering approach because it allowed participants from all generations in the sample group to express themselves. The survey questions made participants think outside the box as they reflected on fresh perspectives in their responses. The open-ended questions on the pre- and-post-surveys were designed to test

the participants' cognitive intellect. Another reason this method was used is that the pre-test would uncover the unprocessed feeling of the church members.

On the other hand, the post-test enabled me to measure the change in attitude, mindset, and knowledge gained among the participants after the training. The measurement is a significant factor in preparing the local church for a teamwork concept of ministry. Additionally, the participants' entries in the weekly journals serve as another data-gathering source that identified applied learning from the training; it determined how the participants reflected on the lectures and interactive discussions in the training workshops. The weekly journal prompts were the following:

Weekly Journal Prompts

Please take your time to journalize. Please write two to three paragraphs of reflections.

Week One Compare and contrast the similarity and dissimilarities between your generation to two or three other generations.
Week Two How do you understand Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 in relationship to the local church?
Week Three What practical and reasonable ways can the generations support each other in the local church?
Week Four Are you pleased with the current level of cooperation among the generations in the church? If yes, why? If not, why not, and what do you think could encourage church members to collaborate more?
Week Five What do you understand about the relationship between people's attitudes, behavior, and personality to how they interact with others in the church?
Week Six What do you make of the interdependency of the ministries and generations in the local Church?

I had a 5-digit numbering system that one of my context associates placed onto the pre- or post-surveys and journal notebooks when they were being distributed. Upon completion, the participants dropped the pre- or post-surveys and journal notebooks directly into a sealed-up box. I opened the box, removed the first 5-digit number, and placed a new 5-digits number onto the pre- or post-surveys and journal notebooks. This way, neither the context associate nor I knew which participant data it was. The interview questions were as follows:

Interview Questions

Please verbally respond to these questions to the best of your knowledge and experience.

Question#1 Based on your experience, why is unity so essential to the life and ministry of the local church?
Question#2 Have you ever refused to support a ministry partner because of a present or past misunderstanding inside or outside the church? If yes, why so? If not, why not?
Question#3 How do you feel when other ministry partners decline to cooperate with you, and what can you do to avoid this from happening?
Question#4 Do you feel that the negative attitude and behavior of some church members harm the growth and development of the church? If yes, why so? If not, why not?
Question#5 Have your attitude and behavior ever hurt your ministry assignment? If yes, why so? If not, why not?
Question#6 Describe two or three times you have valued others' views in the church.

There was a total of eight participants and seven sessions. At the end of the seven weeks of interactive training, each participant completed an evaluation form to assess the presenter. The presenter's evaluation was as follows.

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) Presenter objectives clear					
2) Presenter objectives met					
3) Presenter was well-prepared					
4) Presenter spoke clear/effectively					
5) Presenter exhibited a good understanding of the topic					
6) Presentation was done in a way that engaged the audience					
7) Organized and easy to follow					
8) Presenter started and ended on time					
9) Time for presentation use effectively					
10) Presenter's voice was clear with a good pace					
11) Presenter was professional and confident					

The general feedback from each participant was that each interactive training workshop was vibrant and rewarding, and the participants were allowed to share their views openly. The participants were delighted with my level of presentation for each session.

Implementation

Week One/Session One Discovery Workshop

The initial gathering discussed the seven weeks of interactive training workshops. This session began with prayer and the reading of 1 Corinthians 12:12-14. After that, the pre-test survey consisting of seven open-ended questions was administered to the eight participants. The purpose of the project and the expectations of both the presenter and participants were explained. Also, an overview was given surrounding what the local church stands to benefit from when the various generations support each other. Afterward, I described the rationale behind why I selected to formulate a project around the crucial task of promoting unity among the multiple generations in the local church.

At this juncture, a candid conversation was held concerning my dissertation title, the problem it intends to address, and what the project means for Mount Zion AME Church. We exchanged ideas about the constraint of the project's hypotheses. We all decided that we must analyze the local church's generations considering their characteristics which is the first pillar for the project to be implemented in an informed way.

It was interesting to note that many participants did not know the name and age range of the generation to which they belong based on their date of birth. Their thinking of the term generation was slightly different, which was understandable. For example, some spoke of their great grandparent being first generation, their grandparent as second generation, their parents as the third generation, and themselves as four generations. Based on their understanding of what generation meant, it was an excellent place to begin

the training session. I explained that for this project implementation, the terminology generation would be described "as the average period from birth to adolescence to adulthood."[182]

The generation's explanation was an essential eye-opening for many of the participants. When I listed the age ranges for each generation, the participants started to match themselves with their generation. It was incredibly fascinating to see a minority of the participants happy about what they had learned. Later, I discussed the characteristics and tendencies each generation tends to process and how to recognize these traits and attributes. My presentation surrounding the ages in our church led to a spirited conversation among the participants that set the stage for the entire interactive training workshops.

As we came to the end of the lecture portion for the first session, I gave the participants time to voluntarily share their thoughts on what they have learned about the characteristics of the various generations that they did not know before. After that, one of the context associates distributed the study journals workbook. I gave directions for participants to journalize about week one lectures and write reflections in two to three paragraphs. At the end of the session, I requested a participant to pray, and we dismissed for the day.

Week Two/Session Two Discovery Workshop

The second session started with prayer and the reading of 1 Corinthians 12:15-17. I asked the participants how they felt as we entered the second week of our interactions.

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[182] Sadler, *Pot Changer*, 78.

The responses were positive. I also ascertained from them how the first week of journalizing went, and the feedbacks were mixed. Some participants stated that journalizing is a new territory they are trying to figure out and incorporate into their Christian walk. Afterward, I explained that the session's focus would be discussions about the biblical imperative for unity among church members, which is the project's second pillar. This dialogue is vital in setting the groundwork for unity and generational collaborations in the local church from a scriptural perspective.

I opened the lecture by stating that scripture supports unity among multiple generations in the local church. The symbolic image of the church as the body captured the participants' attention. Paul was very creative in painting this picture of a church plagued by disunity. Divisions mark the entire book of 1 Corinthians. To a large extent, the Corinthian Church seems to be the most divided in the New Testament. Therefore, Paul needed to use the human body to communicate the significance of unity in the church. How the human body functions as a unified organism despite the various parts is impressive.

At this juncture, the participants shared in interactive conversations. We did an in-depth discussion on why unity is essential to the mission, growth, and development of the local church, considering the composition and contextual elements of the Corinthian Church's relationship to our local establishment. The participants were also allowed to voice out their knowledge about what words and phrases such as "diversity," "body,' "body of Christ," "the Church as the body of Christ," "spirit," and 'unity' meant to them.

In discussing some reasons why disunity sometime occurs in the local church, it was agreed that the unreconciled issues among the membership are one of the factors.

Most, if not all, of the unreconciled problems among church members need to be settled. Reconciliation prevents conflicts and divisions among the local church members, which necessitates reconciliation. There was consensus that reconciliation is integral to building peace and reducing the effects of discord and disunity through repairing and transforming damaged generational relationships.

Next, the participants agreed that the local church must discourage disunity and individualization. Every local church member, regardless of age, ethnicity, or race, is valuable and has a fundamental role. I was very impressed that the participants understood the concept of the local church as the human body. Later, I requested one of the context associates to give out a week two journal prompt and asked participants to write reflections in two to three paragraphs. The session ended with prayer, and we ended the session.

Week Three/Session Three Discovery Workshop

The third gathering opened with prayer and the reading of 1 Corinthians 12:18-20 by two participants, respectively. I presented a forty-five-minute lecture on practical methodologies that promote unity among the various generations in the local church. This session laid out the historical foundation for this project. I explained that Cyprian was one of the church's first leaders concerned about unity. Donald K. McKim, in his book, *Theological Turning Points: Major Issues in Christian Thought,* stated that "Cyprian's strong stand for the unity of the church is rooted in Scriptures such as Matthew 16:18–19, John 20:20–23, and Ephesians 4:4–6."[183] I described Cyprian's

[183] McKim, *Theological Turning Points*, 53-54.

position that unity is one of the by-products of love, which seems reasonable and practical. Jealousy and envy harm the unity of the church. Therefore, where there is love, peace exists, and people work together as a united force to execute their ministry assignments.

By week three, the participants had built a connection with each other. The common theme I picked from the interactions among the participants was that maintaining unity in the local church is an individual and collective matter that takes some substantial effort. Satan hates God, and therefore he hates God's people, the church. Satan's grand plan for the church is to cause practicing Christians who ought to be working together on the ministry assignments to find ways of disagreeing among themselves, to divide, to be bitter and jealous, and ultimately to 'bite and devour each other . . . ." (Galatians 5:15). Satan loves to sow discord. Still, by God's Spirit, we can unite as we carry out our ministry assignments.

Also, during the exchanges between the participants, they agreed that the more church members, regardless of the generational alignment, have the mind of Christ, the better the prospect for unity to exist in the local church. Moreover, conflicts surrounding ministry assignments should be dealt with promptly. These overlapping functions are most times swept under the table by church people. Subsequently, I asked one of the context associates to distribute the week-three journal prompt and encouraged the participants to journalize in two to three paragraphs. The session was closed with prayer, and we left for the day.

Week Four/Session Four Discovery Workshop

Session four commenced with prayer and reading of 1 Corinthians 12:21-23 by two participants. The theological foundation of this project served as the source of this session. The focus of the interactive training was the benefits that the church reaps when the generations support each other ministry assignments. I used Richard R. Osmer's four essential tasks of practical theological awareness and assumption, namely: the descriptive-empirical task, the interpretive task, the normative task, and the pragmatic task[184].

In setting the premise of the discussions, I depicted a descriptive picture of what was happening in Mount Zion AME Church among the generations. The conversation covered why there is infighting among the generations, what we should be doing instead, and how we can fix this situation. The participants were honest in admitting that some do not support each other ministry assignments because of generational differences. Most times, one local ministry has too many people who belong to the same generation. We should open all church ministries to every generation. All ages in the local church must feel a sense of purpose and inclusion.

At the end of the session, one of the context associates delivered the week-four journal to the participants. I gave directions for the participants to journalize about the week four lecture and write two-to-three paragraphs of reflections. We closed with prayer and dismissed.

Week Five/Session Five Discovery Workshop

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[184] Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

The fifth session started with prayer and the reading of 1 Corinthians 12:24-27. I asked the participants how they felt as we entered week five of our exchanges. The responses were encouraging. I also asked how the weekly journalizing was coming on, and the feedback this time was favorable. Session five consisted of part one of pillar five. I lectured on the distinction and relationship between sociology and psychology. This information was beneficial because most, if not all of the participants, did not know about sociology and psychology. Still, only one participant has knowledge of social psychology which is the interdisciplinary foundation for this project.

I wrapped up the session, and one of the context associates circulated the week-five journal prompt. I gave directions for participants to journalize about week five interactions in two-to-three-paragraph reflections. At the end of the session, a participant prayed, and we ended the session.

Week Six/Session Six Discovery Workshop

The sixth session began with prayer and the reading of 1 Corinthians 12:24-27. The focus of the six sessions was part two of pillar five, which deals with the Interdependence Theory Model. The primary focus was the change in the generation's attitude through training that may likely lead to positive behavioral adjustments. The tenets of the Interdependence Theory Model aligned with what this project intended to accomplish.

The participants were allowed to converse about the six dimensions of the situational structure and their affordances within the Interdependence Theory Model. These dimensions include the level of dependence, the mutuality of dependency, the basis

of dependency, the covariation of interests, the temporal structure, and the Information availability.

Additionally, this session covered the goals of the interdependence theory, which are to explore individual attitudes, socialization, communication, interpersonal attraction and relationship, personality, and social structure. This session helped the participants to think about new and improved ways of improving generational relationships in the local church that foster teamwork and support each other ministry assignments.

One of the contexts associates distributed the last journal prompt. I gave directions for participants to do their final journal reflections in two-to-three paragraphs about week six and to please bring their journal workbook to the next and last session. At the end of the session, I requested a participant to pray, and the session ended.

Week Seven/Session Seven Discovery Workshop

Session seven commenced with pleasantries, prayer, and the reading of 1 Corinthians 12:24-27 in its entirety. After that, one context associate collected the participants' weekly survey. The participants completed the presenter's evaluation.

Later, the participants and the presenter discussed their impressions of the training and the way forward. We celebrated the conclusion of the interactive activity. Afterward, I thanked them for their participation and heartfelt appreciation. Furthermore, I asked the participants to stay individually for an exit interview after the closing prayer.

Summary of Learning

Based on the empirical data examined, the project presents supporting evidence that if the various generations of Mount Zion receive training about how to collectively implement ministry assignments, then they will have a greater understanding of the teamwork concept of the local church. I did not conduct a demographical survey because it was not necessary. The control group of eight church members represented a cross-section of the generations. All the participants have been members of the church for several years. Table 1-7 contains vital demographic information about the participants' ages and generations.

Table 1. Demographic Data[185]

Generation	Year Range	Age Range	Number
The Builders	1929-1946	76-93	1
The Boomer	1947-1964	58-75	3
Generation X	1965-1980	42-57	2
The Millennials	1981-1995	27-41	1
Generation Z	1996-2010	12-26	1

Table 2. Gender Breakdown[186]

Gender	Number
Female	8
Male	0

[185] The results show that the church's leadership is in the hands of the Boomer generation followed by Generation X.

[186] This breakdown indicates that females are more involved in the life and ministry of Mount Zion AME Church.

Table 3. Years of Membership[187]

How long have you been a member of Mount Zion AME Church?	Number
0-10 years	1
11-20 years	1
21-25 years	1
26 and over	5

Table 4. Leadership Experience[188]

Leadership Experience Outside of the Church	Number
0-10 years	1
11-20 years	0
12-25 years	0
26 and over	0

Table 5. Leadership Experience[189]

Leadership Experience in the Church	Number
0-10 years	2
11-20 years	3
12-25 years	3
26 and over	1

Table 6. Current Leading a Ministry in the Church[190]

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[187] This table depicts that most of the participants have been church members for a long time. They have had firsthand experiences of the generations not supporting each other ministry assignments.

[188] This table implies that most of the participants learned how to be a leader in the church.

[189] This table shows that most participants have a reasonable length of leadership experience in the church.

[190] This table illustrates that most of the participants are currently leaders of the ministry assignment.

Leading a Ministry in the Church	Number
Yes	6
No	2

Table 7. Generational Collaboration Training[191]

Participated in a Generational Collaboration Training before in the Church	Number
Yes	0
No	8

On the first and last day of the project implementations, seven open-ended questions were administered to the control group. The pre-and post-survey questions aimed to examine and identify any variation in the participants' responses after participating in the project. While analyzing the data, I noticed relatively significant movements in some participants' responses between the pre- and-post-project surveys. Considering the substantial progress in the answers of the control group, I am of the utmost confidence that the participants learned a lot of new ideas relating to generational cooperation.

Pre-Project Survey Results

The first question on the pre-project survey was a knowledge-based question that helped me assess whether the participants understood the meaning of unity.

Survey Questions and Outcome

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This table portrays the lack of generational partnership and teamwork training opportunities among the participants who are a part of the local church

Question 1: What is unity? — Outcome

All eight participants attempted to answer this question. One participant responded with the correct definition of unity. Six participants had limited knowledge of unity. They wrote something somewhat relating to togetherness. One participant wrote something that was far away from the meaning of unity.

The second question was descriptive to measure the participants' expectations on whether they expect other church members to support their ministry assignment.

Question 2: Explain how important it is to know and feel that other ministry partners support you — Outcome

All eight participants answered this question. However, only four satisfactorily addressed the importance of knowing and feeling supported by other ministry partners. Their explanations seem to be personal and something they expect to receive. Nevertheless, they sometimes do not feel supported by ministry partners, adversely affecting their productivity. On the other hand, the remaining four participants did not address this question.

The third question was also descriptive to evaluate the level of participants feeling that the local ministries or generations are supporting each other.

Question 3: Are you satisfied with the level of cooperation you receive from your other ministry partners? If yes, why so? If not, why not? — Outcome

All the participants tried to respond to this question. However, their feedbacks were mixed. Two of the participants said "somewhat." One said, "I could not say."

Another one said “sometimes.” Two clearly said “no.” Two undoubtedly said “yes.” The two that suggested somewhat pointed out that ministry partners are supportive at times and others are not because they are not open to change. The one participant that said “I cannot say” gave no reason for their position. The participant that said sometimes pointed out that they were not satisfied with the cooperation received most of the time from other ministry partners. The participants that said no indicated that the ministry partners are not just working together. They speculated that it might be because of generational differences. The last two participants that said yes revealed that they feel satisfied with the level of cooperation they receive from other ministry partners. They based that argument on the premise that they reach out to other ministry partners of different generations for help executing their ministry assignment.

The fourth question was again a descriptive question intended to collect data to develop a detailed listing of the benefits of unity in the local church.

Question 4: What benefits does the local church stand to gain when all the generations work together? — Outcome

One participant said it all depended on what the local church was working on at the time and made no list. Four participants wrote “a lot” with no explanation or list. All the other three participants attempted to list what the local church stands to gain when the generations work in partnership. The list of some of the benefits mentioned are:

a. Build a more vital congregation.

b. Make the decision together.

c. An open line of communication.

d. Church growth and development.

e. Better community and involvement.

f. Understanding of teamwork.

The fifth question was a knowledge-based inquiry question to measure whether the participants were aware that the generations in the church must support each other to succeed.

Question 5: What do you know about the interdependency of the generations that make up the local church? — Outcome:

Based on the data gathered, five participants did not know what it means by the interdependency of the generations. Of this five, two participants wrote nothing in the blank space. The other three of the five wrote down something unrelated to the question. The remaining three participants seem to have understood what it means for generational interdependency to exist in the local church.

The sixth question was an experiential question to measure whether people's attitudes, behavior, and personality positively or negatively impact ministry assignments.

Question 6: Based on your experience, do church members' attitudes, behavior, and personality have anything to do with how effectively your ministry assignment is implemented? If yes, why so? If not, why not? — Outcome

All the participants tried to answer this question. However, two of them just wrote "no" without any further explanation. The other six participants reported "yes" without any reason as well. These responses suggest that the participants avoided the discussion

and did not know. During the training workshop, I paid serious attention to the discussion about people's attitudes, behavior, and personality.

The seventh question intended to measure the importance of this project to the participants and unearth some things that may hinder unity among the generations.

Question 7: Do you think there is a need to promote unity among the generations in the local church? If yes, why so? If not, why not? — Outcome

Three out of the eight participants responded by saying "yes." These three participants gave satisfactory reasons for promoting unity among the generations. For example, promoting unity among the generations bring about cohesiveness. Promoting unity among the generations makes the ministries of the church-run smoother. Promoting unity among the generations leads to togetherness. However, five participants said "yes" and "no" but did not explain.

The following diagram shows the participants' responses to the pre-project survey.

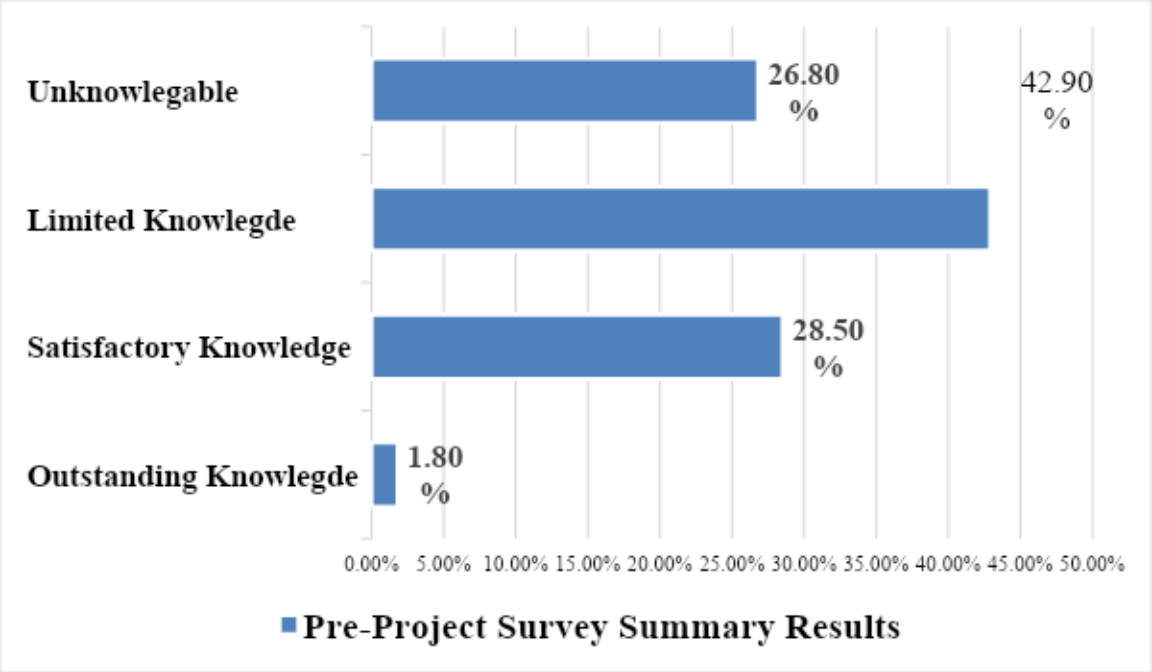

Figure 1.

The summary analysis of the pre-project survey resulted in 1.80% of the eight participants demonstrating outstanding knowledge in answering the questions. The results also revealed that 28.50% showed satisfactory knowledge of the survey. 42.90% of the eight participants exhibited a limited understanding of the survey. Lastly, 26.80% of the eight participants could not answer the questions.

Post-Project Survey Results

The post-project survey measured the participants' knowledge and the importance of the project to the local church after the training. The results are the following.

Question 1: What is unity? — Outcome

All eight participants answer this question. Seven of the eight participants demonstrated outstanding knowledge of the meaning of unity. These seven participants alluded to the primary passage that supports the biblical foundation of the project in their responses. Nevertheless, the reaction of one of the participants still revealed limited knowledge of the significance of unity.

Question 2: Explain how important it is to know and feel that other ministry partners support you. — Outcome

All eight participants responded to this question. However, two of the participants exhibited exceptional skills in answering the question. They referred to the necessity for coexisting ministries in the church by comparing the local church to the human body. Four of the participants displayed satisfactory knowledge in addressing this question. The remaining two participants presented limited and no knowledge in handling this question.

Question 3: Are you satisfied with the level of cooperation you receive from your other ministry partners? If yes, why so? If not, why not? — Outcome

All eight participants displayed tremendous knowledge in dealing with this question regardless of some stating “yes” and others “no.” They drew upon the historical foundation of the project that focused on Saint Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, who tried to unify the African Church amidst hindrance from some members. Interestingly, one participant stated, “I do believe since beginning this training some ministry partners attributes have improved” (Participant: 72023).

Question 4: What benefits does the local church stand to gain when all the generations work together? — Outcome

Two of the participants seem to demonstrate satisfactory knowledge in addressing the question. The remaining six were exceptional in their reactions. They constructed their response around Osmer's practical theological core task: What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond? One of the six mentioned, "When the generations work together, the local church can function like a healthy body. Although discord may exist periodically, it is much easier to solve" (Participant: 22023).

Question 5: What do you know about the interdependency of the generations that make up the local church? — Outcome

The participants that attempted to answer this question relied on the training from the interdisciplinary foundational lecture. Two participants showed excellent knowledge of the subject matter. Three participants expressed satisfactory insight into generational interdependency. Another two participants exhibited limited understanding, and the last had no knowledge after the training. The participant that demonstrated mastery in addressing this question cited that "currently, I don't believe that there are many interdependencies of the generations within the church. However, increasing interdependence among the generations will make the church function more efficiently and be more united" (Participant: 72023).

Question 6: Based on your experience, do church members' attitudes, behavior, and personality have anything to do with how effectively your ministry assignment is implemented? If yes, why so? If not, why not? Outcome

Only four participants satisfactorily ventured to express their feelings surrounding this question. Three participants tended to be dancing around in responding to this question. One did not attempt to reflect on this question. The data collected on this question indicates that the local church needs to have more training sessions surrounding the members' attitudes, behavior, and personality concerning the growth and development of the local church.

Question 7: Do you think there is a need to promote unity among the generations in the local church? If yes, why so? If not, why not? — Outcome

All eight participants tried to address this subject. Six participants provided satisfactory explanations for promoting unity in the local church. The remaining two had restricted views on the matter. Data gathered from this question indicate that most participants think harmony must be encouraged among the generations in the local church.

The following chart indicates the participants' responses in the post-project survey.

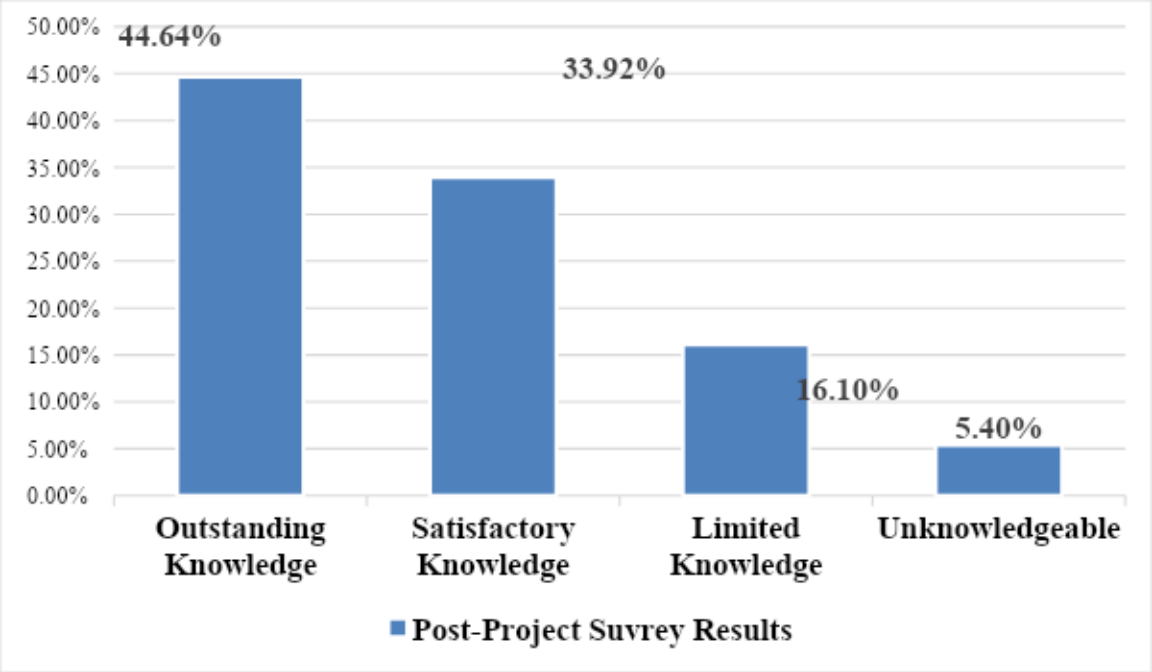

Figure 2.

The summary analysis of the post-project survey resulted in 44.64% of the eight participants demonstrating outstanding knowledge in answering the questions. The results also revealed 33.92% showed adequate expertise in the responses. 16.07% of the eight participants exhibited a limited understanding of the survey. Lastly, 5.37% of the eight participants displayed no knowledge to answer the questions.

Pre-Project versus Post-Project Survey Trend Analysis

The following table and graph depict the trend analysis between the pre-project and post-project surveys supporting the research hypothesis.

Table 8. Trend Analysis[192]

Outcome	Pre-Project Survey	Post-Project Survey
Outstanding Knowledge	1.80%	44.64%
Satisfactory Knowledge	28.50%	33.92%
Limited Knowledge	42.90%	16.07%
Unknowledgeable	26.80%	5.37%

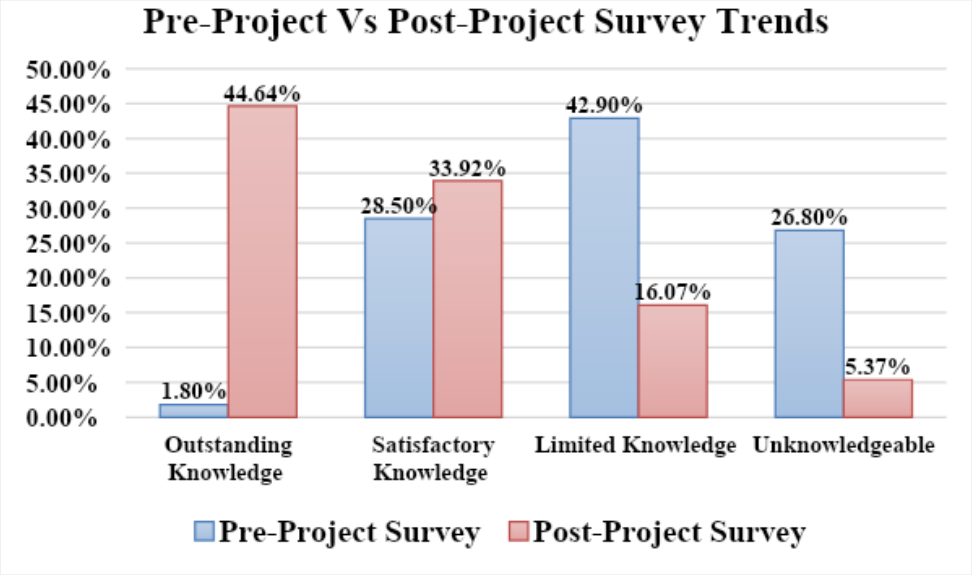

Figure 3.

Weekly Journal Reflections

The weekly research project journal allowed participants to reflect on the previous week's lectures and training. All the participants regularly journaled their reflections, and

[192] Increased or improvement in both the post-project survey outstanding knowledge and satisfactory knowledge categories and decreased in both the post-project survey limited knowledge and unknowledgeable classifications.

their entries denoted that the interdependency theory model influenced their aspirations to work together in the local church.

Evaluations of Journal Reflections

Every participant had one journaling prompt weekly for their reflections. The participants responded to six questions to obtain their written responses on how generational unity could positively impact their ministry assignment in the local church. All eight participants completed and returned the week's journaling book. The following is a summary of all the participants' responses.

The first journaling prompt was a comparative reflection to enable me to assess the participants' knowledge surrounding the unique characteristics of different generations.

Question 1: Compare and contrast the similarity and dissimilarities between your generation to two or three other generations. — Outcome

All participants indicated particularities of their generation and compared it to at least two other generations. The participants explained that they felt more knowledgeable about the characteristics of different age groups. They have learned more about the attributes and behaviors of other generations.

The second journaling prompt was knowledge-based to measure participants' understanding of the passage on which the project's biblical foundation supports.

Question 2: How do you understand Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 in relationship to the local church? — Outcome

All participants expressed an incredible understanding of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 considering the local church ministry. They demonstrated new insights on comparing the functionality of the human body to ministry assignments in the local church. Their reflections encompass harmony, unity, oneness, interdependence, and togetherness. Many overwhelmingly felt that the training based on 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 strengthened and empowered them.

The third journaling prompt was descriptive to evaluate the variation in participants' responses on how the generations in the local church can support each other.

Question 3: What are some practical and reasonable ways that the generations can support each other in the local church? — Outcome

One participant recommended intentional conversations among the generations that would give rise to realistic expectations. Two participants suggested that the generations should start by practicing effective listening to each other needs. Another participant mentioned stepping out of conforming zones and reaching out to other members. Several participants indicated they are more confident, based on their learning experience, that the generations would thrive for unity.

The fourth journaling prompt determines what issues prevent the various generations from working together and how to deal with these issues.

Question 4: Are you pleased with the current level of cooperation among the generations in the church? If yes, why? If not, why not, and what do you think could encourage church members to collaborate more? — Outcome:

The participants were equally divided in their responses to the question. One group clearly said "no," while the others said "yes" and "no." The group that said "no" stated that they were not satisfied with the existing cooperation level in the local church. The generations are disconnected. The formation of a specialized team consisting of a member from each generation would be a good starting point. The function of the team would be to develop ways that promote generational unity. The other group that mentioned "yes" and "no" pointed out that sometimes they feel a level of cooperation and other times they do not. Sometimes they think of cohesion and coordination. Other times the sense of togetherness is non-existing.

The fifth journaling prompt was effective in assessing how participants reflected on the difference between the attitude and behavior that make up the personalities of the various generations in the local church.

Question 5: What do you understand about the relationship between peoples' attitudes, behavior, and personality to how they interact with others in the church? — Outcome

The participants agreed that people's behavior grows out of their attitude, and personality formation takes time. The attitudes and behavior of church members could either encourage people to come to church or keep people away from the church. The members of Mount Zion must cultivate an attitude and behavior that promote unity as they implement their different ministry assignments.

The sixth journaling prompt was cognitive to measure if the participants have learned through the training that the co-existence of the ministries and generations of the local church is directly proportional to its growth and development.

Question 6: What do you make of the interdependency of the ministries and generations in the local church? — Outcome

Several participants conveyed that the interdependency model for ministry is the most appropriate construct for the local church. Some wonder why the local church is not using the interdependency model for ministry assignments. Others felt the training was practical, but they received what was needed. The overwhelming response to this question was positive. Some indicated that they look forward with deep expectations to the time that the generations in Mount Zion would develop a healthy and holistic partnership with each other.

Exit-Interactive Training Interviews

On the final day of the interactive training workshop, I conducted exit interviews with all eight of the participants. The discussions did unearth more detail information. I asked each participant six questions to capture their verbal responses on how the generational independence model impacted their ministry assignment and may influence their leadership and interactions going further. The following are summary notes taken and refined by listening to the recorded interviews. The data constitute the questions and the summary of the findings.

The first interview question was experiential. I wanted to measure the participants' or interviewees' experience and future perspectives on the subject matter.

Question 1. Based on your experience, why is unity so essential to the life and ministry of the local church? — Outcome

All eight participants or interviewees responded in the affirmative that without unity, the local church would not be able to holistically accomplish its mission. They all used Paul's allegory, where he compared the church to the human body. They sighted some real-life events and how disunity hindered the growth of Mount Zion in the past. Few even mentioned the misunderstanding that erupted in 2013 when some members of the church, mostly belonging to the Boomer generation, launched a failed campaign to leave the AME Connection.

The second interview question helped me assess whether family dramas inside and outside the church hinder the effectiveness of the participants' ministry assignment(s).

Question 2. Have you ever refused to support a ministry partner because of a present or past misunderstanding inside or outside the church? If yes, why so? If not, why not? —Outcome

The responses of the participants were evenly divided. Four interviewees suggested "yes," and the other four give the impression of "no" to the best of their knowledge. Participants that pointed to family issues holding them back from supporting a ministry partner said that it is not personal but based on principles. On the other hand, the remaining four mentioned that family issues might exist, but it does not stop them from supporting a ministry partner because they focus on the bigger picture of the church.

The third interview question evaluated how participants feel when other church members or partners fail to cooperate with them in implementing their ministry assignments.

Question 3. How do you feel when other ministry partners decline to cooperate with you, and what can you do to avoid this? — Outcome

All eight of the participants stated that they felt terrible. It is not a good feeling. Interestingly, some even referred to how Bishop Cyprian felt when some church members set roadblocks to his church unity message. All eight participants suggested that teaching sessions like the one we just completed would significantly reduce the lack of cooperation.

The fourth interview question was to get the participants to speak up on how the negative attitudes and behavior of some members harm the forward march of the local church.

Question 4. Do you feel that some church members' negative attitudes and behavior hurt the growth and development of the church? If yes, why so? If not, why not? — Outcome

The overwhelming response to this question was "yes." The participants explained that most times they feel that way. Still, it is a reality that some church members undesirable attitudes and behavior hurt the progress and advancement of the local church. For instance, some church members' conduct is inappropriate to the ministry leader not of their age group, especially if the person is younger than them.

The fifth interview question was personal to determine whether the participants felt their attitude and behavior could harm another person's ministry assignment.

Question 5. Have your attitude and behavior ever harmed your ministry assignment? If yes, why so? If not, why not? — Outcome

Many participants explained that their attitude and behavior have never harmed their ministry assignment. They tried to incorporate every member assigned to their

ministry when making decisions. Nevertheless, few participants were sincere in saying that their dominating attitude and behavior have kept some church members from working with them. They have not been using the teamwork approach. As a result, of this interactive training, they intend to pay closer attention to their attitude and behavior and be more inclusive of everyone.

The last interview question was descriptive to determine whether the participants valued other people's views or generations in the church.

Question 6. Describe two or three times when you have valued others' views in the church. — Outcome

The sixth question was the most challenging question for the participants. All the responses were general. I tried to probe each of them for specific instances, but all my attempts proved futile. The feedback informed me that we still have more work to promote generational unity.

Summary of Data Collected

A total of three methods were used to measure the effectiveness of the interactive training workshops using the discovery approach. The first technique was the pre- and post-project surveys. The second instrument was weekly journal reflection (see Appendix D). The third was exit interviews (see Appendix E) with all the participants. The analysis of the pre- and post-project surveys shows improvement in the knowledge of the participants in the control group. Data collected from the pre- and post-project surveys revealed that members would develop their understanding of generational interdependence through training.

I based the survey, journaling, and interview questions on the pillars of the project. The collective responses of the participants show that they learned new information during the sessions. The latest insights resulted in improvement in their knowledge levels. As the participants grew in their understanding of interdependence, they identified instances of this concept. Then they could transfer this understanding to their ministry assignment in the church. For example, several participants started referring to words such as harmony, unity, oneness, cohesion, teamwork, and one accord during the discussions in the training workshops. The participants also pointed out coordination, mutuality, and interconnection concepts in the journal reflections and interviews.

Based on the observed data analyzed, the project offers supportive evidence for effective measures of growth in the areas of the biblical imperative for unity, understanding the contribution of Saint Cyprian about church unity and Osmer's core tasks of practical theological interpretations, and understanding of the social psychological interdependence theory.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Ministry Focus chapter of this project recognized that within Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, Winnsboro, South Carolina, that there is a need for interactive training to help enlighten the generations in the local church to move from problem to interdependence in the execution of their ministry assignments. The issue present in the context is the inability of adult church members to work together in performing their ministry assignments. If adult members of all generations are unable

to support each other ministry assignments, it is less likely for the local church to grow and develop. As a result, this Doctor of Ministry project entitled "The Development of A Training Model that Promotes Unity Among Multiple Generations in the Local Church" sought to address this need by using the Interdependence Model for mutuality of dependence in support of the hypothesis that if the various generations receive training about how to collectively implement ministry assignments, then they will have a greater understanding of the teamwork concept of the local church.

The research methodology included an examination of the biblical foundation that focused on unity resulting from one body with several parts as illustrated in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. An analysis of the historical figure Saint Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, revealed that it is practical to work toward promoting unity among the generations. Additionally, the research method analyzed Richard R. Osmer's practical theology interpretations around the following core tasks: What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond? The social science of social psychology as it relates to the Interdependence Theory integrates with the empirical component of Osmer's practical theology core tasks.

The question that arises is whether the hypothesis was supported or invalidated. The answer to this question is yes; the hypothesis was supported. The project was successful in several ways. Firstly, the results from the pre-project survey compared to the post-project survey demonstrated growth in the outstanding knowledge category of participants from 1.80% to 44.64% and satisfactory knowledge from 28.50% to 33.95%. The unknowledgeable category of participants decreased from 26.80% to 5.40%, and the limited knowledgeable category also dropped from 42.90% to 16.10%. Additionally, as I

listened to and observed the discussions between the participants during the weekly training workshops, the qualitative data revealed that the participants were analyzing, questioning, and attempting to figure out strategies on how generations can work together considering their different characteristics. Likewise, most participants could recognize, define, and give examples of interdependence, attitude, behavior, and personality formation.

Many things went as planned in the research project. The participants exhibited overwhelming commitment and dedication to the research project. They were on time for workshop sessions and completed their weekly journal reflection. Secondly, the participants recommended on one occasion that the training workshop be moved up from 4 pm to 1 pm to enable them to attend a community activity later that evening. Thirdly, the participants found the weekly lecture notes very helpful. They preferred receiving only the lecture note for each session instead of the entire interactive training lecture notes for the whole project simultaneously. Furthermore, the Interactive Discovery Training approach worked so well. Lastly, the candid exchanges between the participants, on the one hand, and the participants and the presenter, on the other hand, created a conducive interactive atmosphere for learning.

There were very few challenges during the research project. Firstly, the control group of the research consists of all females. I could not recruit males to participate in the control group. I asked our church information officer, who was also one of the context associates, to encourage male members to volunteer for the project. She did on many occasions, but the male members seemed uninterested. I was a bit concerned that the study results would be one-sided. However, my context associates' justification for the

gender imbalance of the project alleviated my concern. The context associates argued that the results will still represent the reality of the composition of the church's membership because seventy percent of the church members are females and are the leaders of most of the church's organizations or ministries. Secondly, it seemed like I allowed a few participants to talk too much, and we had to go over the set time one or two times. I am conscious of this shortcoming and will be cautious of time in the future and do a better job controlling the amount of time allotted to each participant.

After completing the project, I asked the participants to suggest a way forward. The participants could translate what they learned from the lectures into a recommendation. They recommended that we formulate a new ministry in the church called Multiple Generational Tact Team (MGTT), consisting of a member from each generation that will meet monthly for intentional conversations on how to foster cooperation among the members of the church. Secondly, the participants were so impressed with the Interactive Discovery Training Workshop approach they requested that I should conduct another seven-week interactive training session again. But this time, it should consist of at least four church members from each generation beginning from the Boomer Generation to Generation Alpha. Lastly, sharing this project with our bishop and the Christian Education Direction of the 7th Episcopal District, AME Church, was suggested. The participants believe that this training workshop was not only educational but also transformational. The participants desire that more members benefit and grow in the knowledge of the interdependence of the generations in the local church.

APPENDIX A

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EVENT FLYER

Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church

Seven-Week Interactive Training Workshops

(In Partial Fulfillment of Doctoral Dissertation at United Theological Seminary)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRAINING MODEL THAT PROMOTES UNITY AMONG MULTIPLE GENERATIONS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Held in the Fellowship Hall

at

Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church

324 Honeybee Circle

Winnsboro, SC 29180

Email Address:mountzionamechu@gmail.com

Interested Church Members are requested to please contact the Church Information Officer/ Secretary for additional information

Reverend Cassius Levan Barclay

PRESENTER/RESEARCHER

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Leadership Development Interactive Training Workshops
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Researcher/Investigator Name: Reverend Cassius Levan Barclay
Contact Information: Cell Number 803.363.1124
Email Address: gargaclb@gmail.com

Introduction:
I am a doctoral student at United Theological Seminary.

Purpose:
I am conducting a study on The Development of A Training Model that Promotes Unity Among Multiple Generations in the Local Church.

Requirements for Participation:
You are invited because you are a member of Mount Zion African Methodist Church, which falls under one of the generations that made up the church that is being studied in the project.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to come to the Mount Zion African Episcopal Church Fellowship Hall for Seven Saturdays beginning August 27 and ending October 8, 2022, for 1 hour and 30 minutes of interactive training workshops. I will present a lecture on six of the seven Saturdays, and you will be expected to partake in the discussions after each presentation. I will administer a pre-survey and post-survey to the participants. A journal prompt will be distributed weekly from our first gathering to our fifth meeting for your reflection during the week, and you are free to share your thoughts weekly when we meet. At the end of the session, I will conduct an interview with all the participants.

Risks:
Some unreconciled family issues may come up in the discussions that may not go down well with you. You may feel uncomfortable unearthing that you may have contributed to some form of disunity in the church.

Benefits:
This research will help us formulate a methodology and/or road map that would promote unity through interdependence among multiple generations for the growth and development of our church and all local churches. Each participant will have made a significant contribution to the Christian Church that will outlive them.

Voluntariness:
Participation is voluntary, and you may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. You can also stop participating at any time. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your membership here at Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church. If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in the study, please

get in touch with me directly in person, on the phone, or via electronic communication. My contact information is at the top of this consent form. You can refuse to respond to any or all the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time.

Confidentiality:
We will be careful to keep your information confidential, and we will ask you and all the focus group members to keep the discussion confidential as well. There is always a small risk of unwanted or accidental disclosure. The conversations and the focus groups will be recorded and transcribed only with your permission. Any notes, recordings, or transcriptions will be kept private. I will be the only one with access to your information. The files will be encrypted and password protected. You can decide whether you want your name used. I will be the only presenter or researcher present at the weekly interactive training workshops. Some of our sessions will be recorded on my cell phone so that I will be able to go back and review them.

Summary:
If you have any questions about the research study, please get in touch with me.

Signature:

Signing this paper means that you have read this, or had it read to you and that you want to be in the study. Do not sign the document if you do not want to be in the study. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study, why it is being done, and what to do.

Signature of Person Agreeing to:	**Date Signed:**

APPENDIX C

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRE-AND-POST-TEST SURVEY

Leadership Development

Pre-and-Post Surveys

1) What is Unity? 1. 2.
2) Explain how important it is to know and feel that another supports you ministry partners.
3) Are you satisfied with the level of cooperation you receive from your other ministry partners? If yes, why so? If not, why not?
4) What benefits does the local church stand to gain when all the generations work together?
5) What do you know about the interdependency of the generations that make up the church?
6) Based on your experience, do church members' attitudes, behavior, and personality have anything to do with how effective your ministry assignment is implemented?
7) Do you think there is a need to promote unity among the generations in the local Church? If yes, why so? If not, why not?

APPENDIX D

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WEEKLY JOURNAL PROMPTS

Leadership Development

Journal Prompts

Week One
Compare and contrast the similarity and dissimilarities between your generation to two or three other generations.
Week Two
How do you understand Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 in relationship to the local church?
Week Three
What practical and reasonable ways can the generations support each other in the local church?
Week Four
Are you pleased with the current level of cooperation among the generations in the church? If yes, why? If not, why not, and what do you think could encourage church members to collaborate more?
Week Five
What do you understand about the relationship between people's attitudes, behavior, and personality to how they interact with others in the church?
Week Six
What do you make of the interdependency of the ministries and generations in the local Church?

APPENDIX E

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Leadership Development

Interview Questions

Question#1
Based on your experience, why is unity so essential to the life and ministry of the local church?
Question#2
Have you ever refused to support a ministry partner because of a present or past misunderstanding inside or outside the church? If yes, why so? If not, why not?
Question#3
How do you feel when other ministry partners decline to cooperate with you, and what can you do to avoid this from happening?
Question#4
Do you feel that the negative attitude and behavior of some church members hurt the growth and development of the church? If yes, why so? If not, why not?
Question#5
Have your attitude and behavior ever harmed your ministry assignment? If yes, why so? If not, why not?
Question#6
Describe two or three times you have valued others' views in the church.

APPENDIX F

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRESENTER EVALUATION

Presenter Evaluation

Please take your time complete this evaluation. Use the scale to respond to each question.

Please indicate your response with a check.

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) Presenter objectives clear					
2) Presenter objectives met					
3) Presenter was well-prepared					
4) Presenter spoke clear/effectively					
5) Presenter exhibited a good understanding of the topic					
6) Presentation was done in a way that engaged the audience					
7) Organized and easy to follow					
8) Presenter started and ended on time					
9) Time for presentation use effectively					
10) Presenter's voice was clear, with a good pace					
11) Presenter was professional and confident					

COMMENTS

-PROS

-CONS

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